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Cover and Contents photographs by Scott Phillips; illustration by Marta Antelo; food styling, cover, by Allison Ehri Kreitler, page 3 by Frank Melodia

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Ears, Tails, and All



Dare of the day: shrimp off a truck and a sauce so hot it came with a warning.

TRY ANYTHING NEW lately? A fruit you've never bought before? An unusual-sounding dish? A recipe with an unfamiliar technique? I go looking for these kinds of opportunities—but that wasn't always the case.

Raised in a food-conservative midwestern family, I grew up on steak and potatoes. There was chili and spaghetti, too, but there was no fish. And there were definitely no pig's ears. I ordered those last week at a buzz-worthy place called Animal on L.A.'s ever-evolving Fairfax Avenue. They were crispy, chewy, moreish. A few days before that, I bypassed the pizza my kids were having in favor of the garlicky lemon-butter shrimp with spicy sauce ("Very hot. No refunds.") from the window of Giovanni's shrimp truck on Oahu's North Shore. A favorite souvenir from a trip to St. Martin some years back is the memory of a beach picnic of hot pig's tail soup and cold beer.

Even if I occasionally have to talk myself into the food on my fork, I'm almost always glad I do. And even if I don't nail the dish I'm cooking the first time out, I'll get closer the next time. And the next.

This issue is filled with new things to try, persimmons, mackerel, and the wines of a place called Montsant among them. And it's packed with culinary challenges, including a tutorial on how to make the flakiest, most buttery piecrust ever. If you suffer from a fear of turkey (don't we all, at least a little?), I hope you'll feel empowered to take on the big bird once you've seen our all-you-need-to-know guide to the holiday meal in this month's expanded Repertoire column.

So why not make a salad with fuyu persimmons and fennel (page 16) or bake a bake-off worthy pie (page 56)? Heck, why not offer to make Thanksgiving this year (page 29)? Bet you'll be glad you do.



Laurie Buckle, editor
fc@taunton.com



more fine cooking

BOOKS

Assistant food editor Melissa Pellegrino adds "cookbook author" to her many accomplishments this month, with the release of *The Italian Farmer's Table,* which she wrote with her husband, Matthew Scialabba. It's the delicious story of the many months they spent working in the gardens and cooking in the kitchens of 30 *agriturismi*—small family farms—in northern Italy. Available in November; $19.95.

Contributing editor Ellie Krieger is following the success of her best-selling, award-winning cookbook, *The Food You Crave,* with *So Easy,* an irresistible collection of 150 quick and healthful recipes for every meal of the week. Don't miss her rush-hour dinners: a month of main courses that you can whip up in less than half an hour. Available in October; $29.95.

We, too, have a new book out this fall: *Absolutely Chocolate,* from the editors of *Fine Cooking,* is an absolutely decadent collection of all our best chocolate recipes, from Old-Fashioned Hot Fudge to Chocolate Pavlova with Tangerine Whipped Cream. Available in October; $29.95.

SPECIAL ISSUES

We have two new special issues hitting newsstands in October: *Sweet Cakes* (perfect for holiday baking) and *Parties!* (mix-and-match menus for every occasion). To order, go to FineCooking.com.

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THE WINNER

Reader tip: let the sun shine

If you have a plastic storage container that's been stained by foods like tomato sauce, leaving the container out in the sun for a few hours will remove the stains. The sun's ultraviolet radiation breaks apart molecular structures and changes the way color is reflected; this photochemical change makes the stains disappear. It also kills bacteria. *—Deanna Figueroa, Victoria, Texas*

We want to hear from you. Give us your best tip and we'll reward you with a kitchen prize. Deanna is the winner of this Chef's Choice premium electric food slicer, model 610.

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Lobster: two views

I wanted to commend you on "Lobster 101" in the August/ September Test Kitchen. Killing a lobster before you cook it requires extra time and work, but simply throwing it into a pot of boiling water is indeed cruel. Thanks for having the gumption to tell it like it is and for encouraging your readers to be humane.

—Ruth Lucas Wilson, via email

Your story about how to kill a lobster is cruel and inhumane. I understand that not everyone wants to be a vegetarian, but to me, this article has crossed a line.

—Martina Lerede, via email

PVC usage

On page 83 of Test Kitchen in your June/July issue, it says that chefs sometimes use PVC piping as ring molds. Is this a food-safe option?

—Barbara Goldstein, via email

Editors' reply: PVC, like a lot of other plastics, is fine when used for cold food preparations, but it should not be used for hot food, especially if it isn't food-grade PVC. The concern is that chemicals may be released when non-food-grade PVC is heated higher than 140°F (although even then, it's a minute amount).

Beer alone

In your August/September issue you introduce us to beer cocktails ("Beer Becomes a Cocktail," page 32). I put those who mix a fine beer with lesser ingredients in the same category as someone who would paint a fine piece of wood or put ketchup on a steak. Make mine hoppy and make it a treat for all the senses, but please don't make my beer into something it never was meant to be.

—Charles McEniry, Stoughton, Wisconsin

Picture perfect

What a great cover photo on your August/ September issue; I could almost smell the freshly grilled corn. The articles also meet your traditional high standards. I found lots of inspiration, as I do in all of your issues.

—David Lilly, Los Angeles, California

CORRECTIONS

Please note that in issues 97 through 100, the sodium content column on the Nutrition page should have read "mg" rather than "g." We apologize for any confusion.

Also, the food stylist for the August/ September cover was Michelli Knauer.

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Frank Melodia ("Good Catch," page 68; "French Onion Soup," page 64) is a food stylist and recipe developer whose work regularly appears in *Redbook* and *Woman's Day*. When not styling or cooking, he tends his garden in Great River, New York.

- **My favorite food memory is...** eating a brioche stuffed with scoops of buffalo milk gelato, topped with whipped buffalo cream, for breakfast in Campania, Italy.
- **The strangest thing I've ever eaten...** fried scorpions in Thailand.
- **My favorite cookbook is...** my signed copy of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* by Julia Child and Simone Beck. Julia signed it with a red pen.



Chris Santos ("French Onion Soup," page 64) is co-owner and executive chef of The Stanton Social in New York City. He also works as a food stylist and consultant on movies and is developing a line of chef's apparel with tattoo artist Michelle Myles.

- **My favorite kitchen tool is...** a hand-held immersion blender. I want to design a holster for it so it's always by my side.
- **I'm currently obsessed with...** making compound salts like olive salt, bacon salt, or jalapeño salt.
- **Pie or cake?** Cake. It's way more interesting than pie. And who's ever heard of a birthday pie?



Anne Willan ("French Onion Soup," page 64) is the founder of La Varenne cooking school. She has more than 30 years of experience as a teacher, cookbook author, and culinary historian. Her latest book, *The Country Cooking of France,* won two 2008 James Beard Awards.

- **Sweet or salty?** Salty. I'm a cook, not a pastry cook.
- **For breakfast, I eat...** muesli with pomegranate juice.
- **The dish I most want to learn to cook is...** those little "pearls" that are so popular in molecular gastronomy.



Jeanne Kelley ("Grape Crush," page 40) is a food writer, recipe developer, and food stylist. She is the author of the award-winning cookbook *Blue Eggs and Yellow Tomatoes* and lives in Eagle Rock, California, with her husband, two daughters, chickens, turkeys, and bees.

- **My favorite kitchen tool is...** my garlic press.
- **The last thing I cooked was...** grilled sourdough pizza with goat cheese, Aleppo pepper, and an herb drizzle.
- **My least favorite food is...** mayonnaise, unless it's homemade.



A former food editor and test kitchen director, Nicole Rees ("Pie Dreams," page 56) is currently the research and development manager for a baking ingredient company in Wilsonville, Oregon. *Baking Unplugged,* her most recent cookbook, was published in February.

- **My latest drink discovery is...** Founders Kentucky Breakfast Stout, which is aged in bourbon barrels. It tastes like coffee and beer in the best possible way.
- **My favorite herb is...** parsley. I can't cook without it.
- **My go-to weeknight dinner is...** my take on pasta carbonara, with tons of garlic, white wine, and of course, parsley.



Jay Weinstein ("Good Catch," page 68) is a New York City-based food writer, editor, cooking teacher, and cookbook author. His writing and recipes have been featured in *The New York Times, National Geographic Traveler,* and *Travel + Leisure.*

- **My favorite food memory is...** eating a peach I picked through the window of my car in Escondido, California. It was so ripe, the juice ran down my arm when I bit into it. No napkin was worthy of it.
- **My top food destination is...** Singapore.
- **My guilty food pleasure is...** imitation crab sticks mixed with mayo and Old Bay on a toasted hot dog roll.

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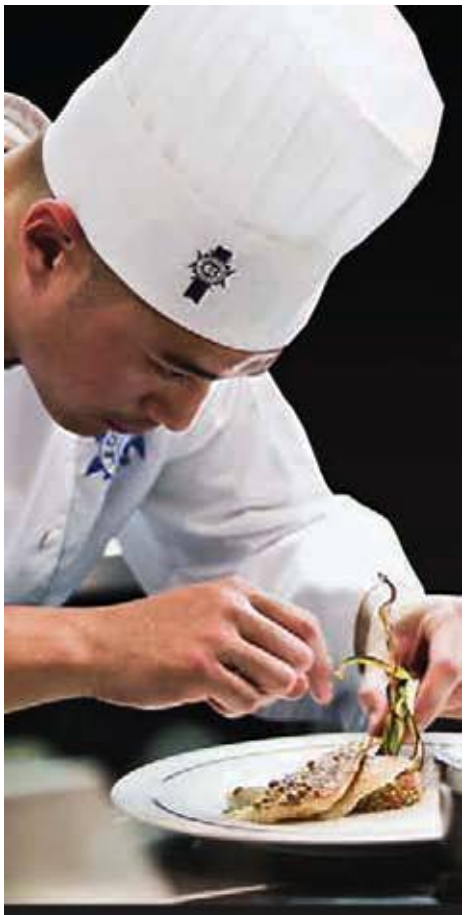
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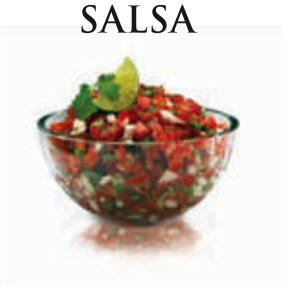
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- Classic holiday pies
- From-scratch puff pastry tarts

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Winners' Spotlight

Congratulations to Brynne Valouch, winner of our Create Your Own Ice Cream Contest, which invited users to dream up concoctions based on David Lebovitz's simple ice cream formula (June/July 2009). The FineCooking.com community chose Brynne's **Spiced Sweet Potato Ice Cream** as the winner out of 10 wildly creative entries. Check out her recipe at FineCooking.com.

Brynne wins a Cuisinart Flavor Duo two-bowl ice cream maker.



Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Allison Ehri Kreitler, except ice cream, Samantha Seneviratne

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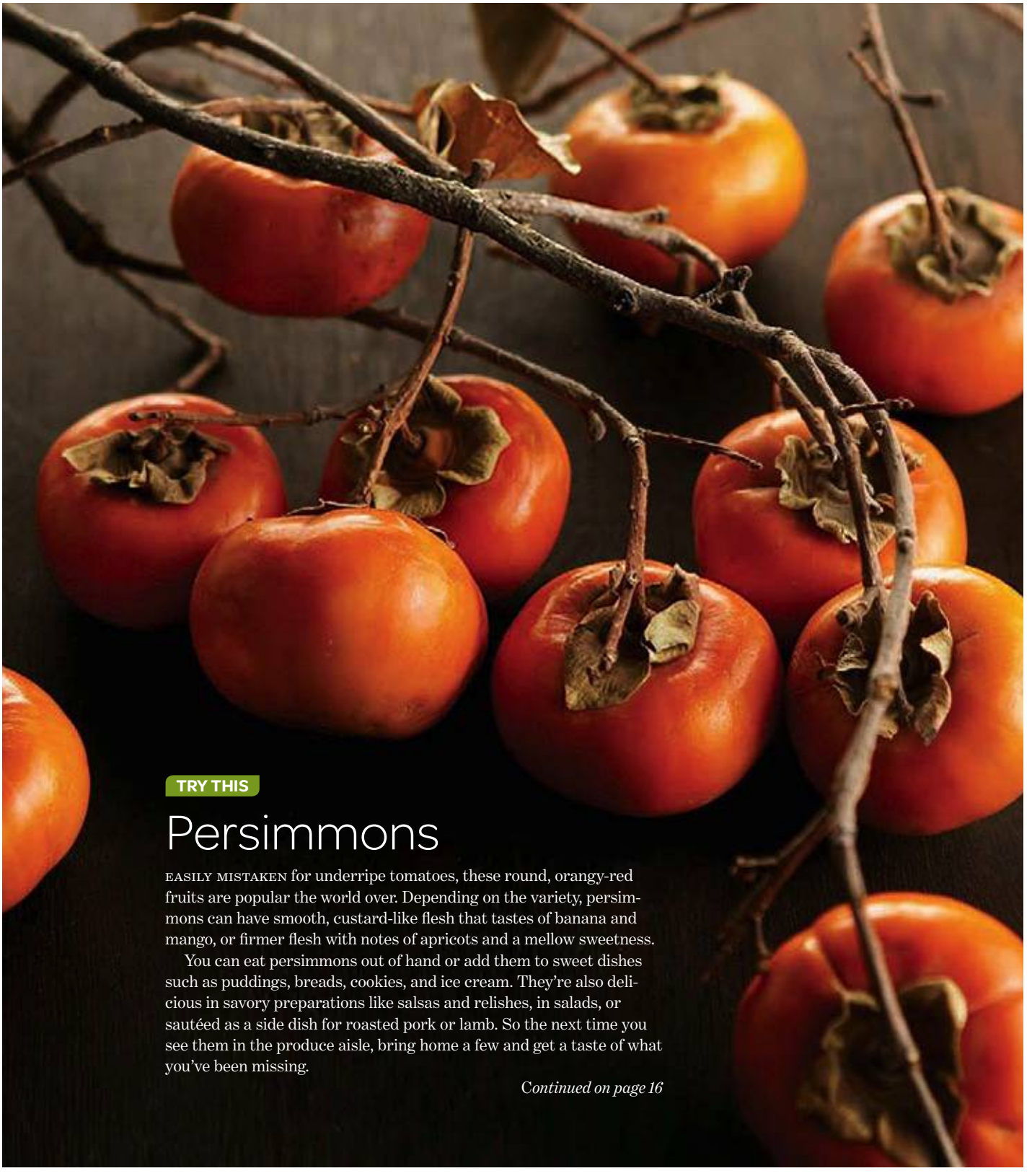
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Persimmons

EASILY MISTAKEN for underripe tomatoes, these round, orangy-red fruits are popular the world over. Depending on the variety, persimmons can have smooth, custard-like flesh that tastes of banana and mango, or firmer flesh with notes of apricots and a mellow sweetness.

You can eat persimmons out of hand or add them to sweet dishes such as puddings, breads, cookies, and ice cream. They're also delicious in savory preparations like salsas and relishes, in salads, or sautéed as a side dish for roasted pork or lamb. So the next time you see them in the produce aisle, bring home a few and get a taste of what you've been missing.

Continued on page 16

TRY THIS PERSIMMONS

What they are

Part of the genus *Diospyros,* which means "fruit of the gods" in Greek, persimmons are tree fruits grown in many countries, including China, Italy, the United States, and Japan (where they are considered the national fruit). They are in season from fall through winter and are an excellent source of fiber as well as vitamins A and C.

Persimmon varieties are divided into two categories, astringent and nonastringent. Astringent varieties, such as the acorn-shaped Hachiya, are tannic and sour when underripe; they should be eaten when very ripe and jelly-soft. Fuyu (shown on page 15) is the most common nonastringent variety; shaped like pincushions, they are smaller than Hachiyas and have fewer tannins, so they can be eaten both underripe and soft. The Fuyu has a subtle, crisp flavor reminiscent of apricots, while the Hachiya has tropical fruit notes and is very rich and sweet.

How to buy and store them

Look for fruit that is plump, heavy for its size, and vibrantly colored, with glossy skin. Avoid those with bruises, blemishes, or cracks. Keep the unripe fruit at room temperature, preferably in a brown paper bag, to help it ripen. If persimmons are already ripe and soft when you buy them, eat them right away or store in the refrigerator for no more than two days.

How to cook with them

Remove the core for both eating and cooking. The skin is edible, though you may want to peel it, because it can be a little waxy. Cut the fruit into wedges, slices, or cubes.

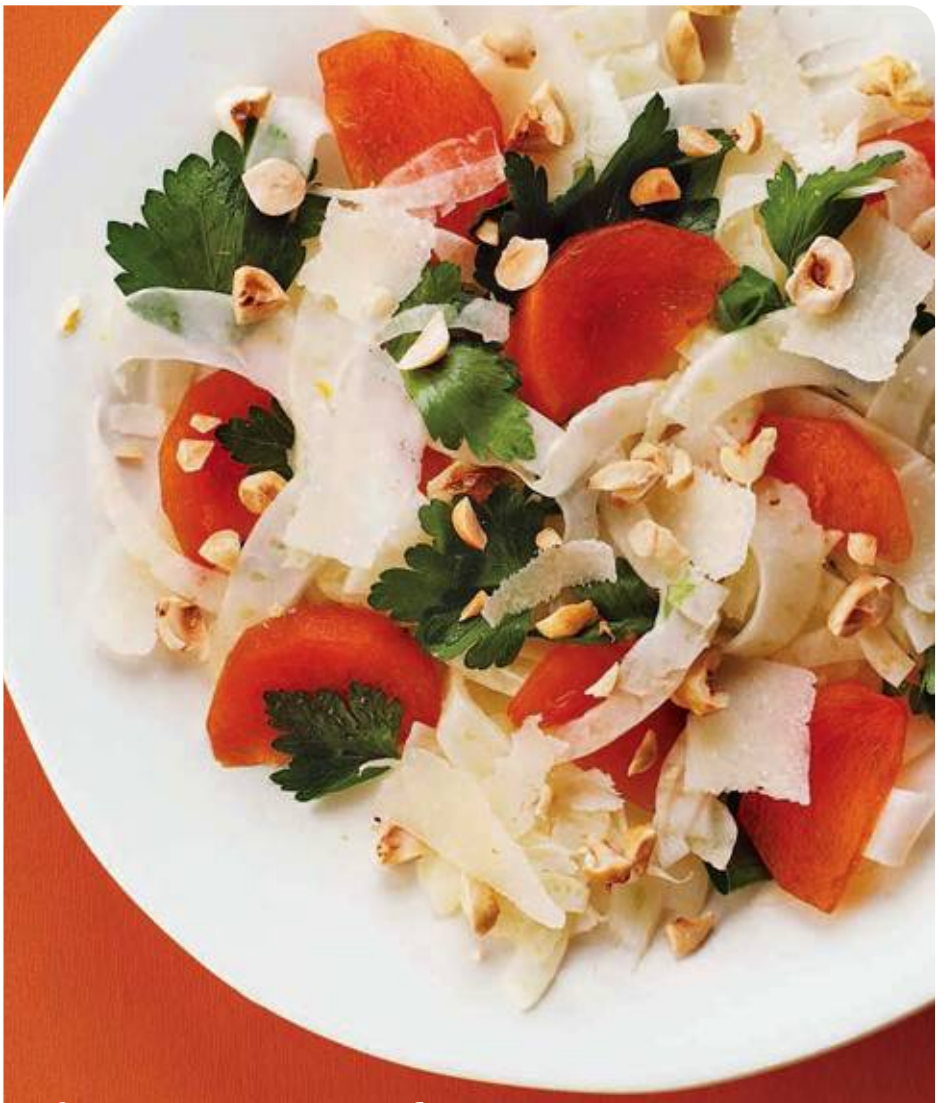
Ripe Hachiyas are often the persimmon of choice for sweet dishes. The firmer texture and subtly sweet flavor of Fuyus make them a good variety for savory preparations.

—Melissa Pellegrino

NEWS BITE

Online veggie swap

Veggietrader.com is a high-tech version of leaving your extra zucchini on the neighbor's stoop. Search by zip code to find the fruit, vegetables, or seeds being offered (or wanted) near you, then contact the grower or buyer through the site.



fuyu persimmon and fennel salad with hazelnuts

Serves 6

- **6 Tbs. fresh orange juice**
- **2 Tbs. white wine vinegar**
- **2 Tbs. minced shallot**
- **2 tsp. finely grated orange zest**
- **Kosher salt**
- **½ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **4 medium ripe Fuyu persimmons, peeled, quartered, cored, and thinly sliced**
- **2 medium bulbs fennel, trimmed, cored, and very thinly sliced or shaved with a mandoline or vegetable peeler**
- **⅓ cup lightly packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves, coarsely torn if large**
- **Freshly ground black pepper**
- **½ cup toasted, peeled hazelnuts, chopped**
- **½ cup shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano**

Put the orange juice, vinegar, shallot, zest, and ¼ tsp. salt in a small bowl and let sit for 15 to 30 minutes to soften the shallot and meld the flavors. Gradually whisk in the oil.

In a large bowl, toss the persimmons, fennel, and parsley with enough of the vinaigrette to coat (you may not need all of it). Season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide among 6 salad plates and sprinkle with the hazelnuts and Parmigiano-Reggiano.

Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Jennifer Armentrout



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WHAT WE'RE COOKING NOW

Pecans, Eggplant, Sweet Potatoes

Nine ways to use three seasonal ingredients we can't get enough of. *Fine Cooking* editors share some delicious ideas.



Pecans

Pecan-crusted fish fillets
Chopped pecans make a crunchy crust for any thin white fish fillet (think tilapia or sole). Dredge the fillet in flour, dip it in buttermilk, then coat with a mixture of finely chopped pecans, breadcrumbs, salt, and pepper. Cook the fillets in a little oil in a nonstick skillet until the crust is golden and the fish flakes.

—Lisa Waddle



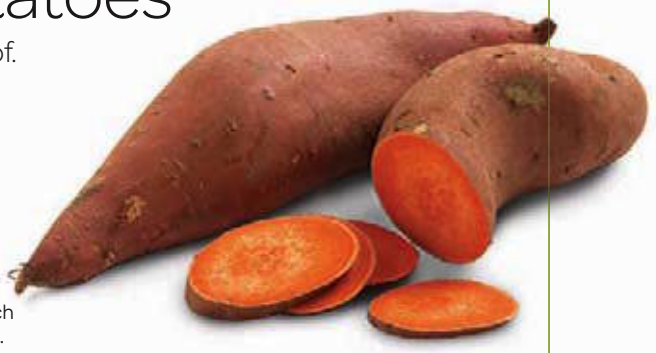
Pecan butter
Combine chopped toasted pecans with a softened stick of unsalted butter, maple syrup, and a pinch of salt. Using waxed paper or plastic wrap, roll the pecan butter into a long, thin cylinder and chill in the refrigerator until firm. It's great on everything from pancakes and baked potatoes to steamed veggies.

—Juli Roberts



Sugar and spice pecans
Toast pecans on a baking sheet in a medium-hot oven. Mix light brown sugar, cayenne, kosher salt, and a few grinds of black pepper. Transfer the pecans to a large bowl and toss them with melted butter and the sugar-spice mixture. Line the baking sheet with foil, return the pecans to the sheet, and bake again until golden brown. The pecans will continue to crisp as they cool.

—Kelly Gearity



Eggplant



Roasted eggplant "sandwiches"
This bread-free sandwich is a favorite at my house. Stack sliced fresh mozzarella, torn fresh basil, and a slice or two of ripe tomato between thick slices of roasted eggplant, and serve with a fork and knife.

—Lisa Waddle



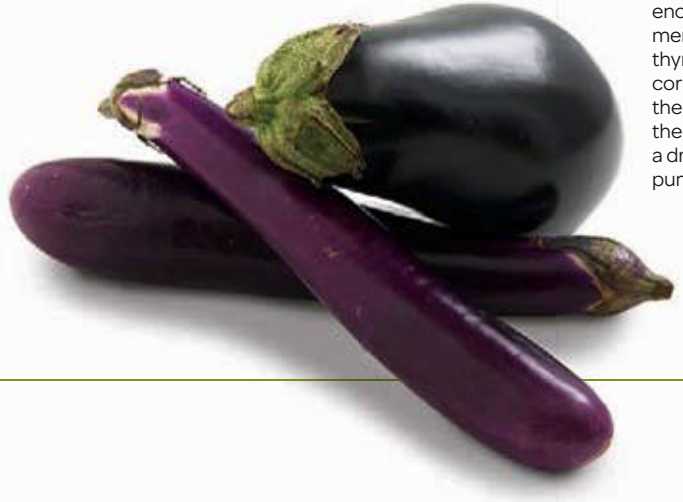
Grilled eggplant with cumin-coriander butter
Toast some whole cumin, coriander, and brown mustard seeds in a dry skillet until aromatic. Lightly crush the seeds in the pan (you can use the bottom of a small pot), then add a few tablespoons of butter to the pan and stir to melt. Pour the spiced butter over slices or wedges of grilled or roasted eggplant.

—Sarah Breckenridge



Marinated eggplant
For an easy appetizer, arrange grilled eggplant slices in a shallow bowl, add some sliced garlic, chopped fresh parsley and basil, and pour on enough good olive oil to soak the eggplant. Cover and marinate for 24 hours in the refrigerator before serving at room temperature.

—Laura Giannatempo



Sweet Potatoes



Sweet potato pancakes
Jazz up a breakfast favorite by adding cooled mashed sweet potato to the batter. I use my standard pancake recipe but include about ½ cup of mashed sweet potato for every 1 cup of flour. A touch of cinnamon and nutmeg is nice, too.

—Denise Mickelsen



Twice-baked sweet potatoes
Bake sweet potatoes until tender, then halve them lengthwise and scoop out the flesh, leaving a border of flesh so the skin holds its shape. Mash the flesh with either chipotle, lime juice, and sour cream or maple syrup, fresh thyme, and butter. Mound the mash back into the skins and bake until hot.

—Jennifer Armentrout



Sweet potato-leek soup
Sauté some sliced leeks in butter and oil until tender but not browned. Add sliced sweet potatoes and enough chicken broth to cover. Simmer with a bouquet garni (bay leaf, thyme, parsley, and black peppercorns in a cheesecloth pouch) until the potatoes are tender. Discard the bouquet and purée. Serve with a drizzle of cream and toasted pumpkin seeds.

—Melissa Pellegrino

Photographs by Scott Phillips

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Creamy Bow Tie Casserole — Serves 6

1/4 cup Amore Tomato Paste
2 tsp Amore Pesto Paste
or 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
1 tsp Amore Garlic Paste
15oz container ricotta
1 cup milk
8oz bow tie pasta
Salt
4 oz mozzarella, cut into 1/2-dice
1 cup thawed frozen peas
1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
1 cup grated Parmesan

In a large bowl, whisk together the Amore Tomato, Pesto and Garlic Pastes with the ricotta until smooth. Whisk in the milk. Cook the pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water until tender. Drain well. Toss the pasta with the tomato paste mixture. Stir in the mozzarella, peas, cherry tomatoes, and half of the Parmesan. Spread the pasta in a buttered 8-inch square baking dish. Sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan. Cover with foil and bake in a 350°F oven for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake 10 minutes more or until browned and bubbly. Serve hot.



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PRESERVING THE SEASON

Apples and Pears

Make the most of the season's bounty—turn it into sweet fruit butter.

BY ABIGAIL JOHNSON DODGE



NOW IS THE BEST TIME to buy (or pick) crisp, juicy fall apples and pears, so go wild at your local orchard or farmers' market and start cooking. Fruit butter—a sweet spread made from cooked-down fruit—is a great way to keep the flavors of the season on hand for weeks (or months, if canned). It's simple to make and utterly delicious.

Fruit butter is, of course, perfect for spreading on hot toast, muffins, or scones, but you can do much more with it. Use it to glaze lamb chops or pork tenderloin; make a quick sundae with vanilla or cinnamon ice cream, warm fruit butter, and toasted nuts; stir the butter into plain yogurt, cottage cheese, or oatmeal; or use it instead of mayonnaise on a turkey and cheddar panini. The possibilities are endless, though the season is not.

Top picks

There are many flavorful apple and pear varieties available nationally, and most of them make delicious fruit butters. Here are our favorites:

Apples: Honey Crisp, Ida Red, Rome Beauty, McIntosh, Cortland, Ginger Gold, Golden Delicious

Pears: Anjou, Concorde, Bosc, Bartlett

maple apple-pear butter

Cook the apples and pears with their peels, cores, and seeds to get every ounce of flavor from the fruit. Regardless of what pear variety you use, they must be ripe, or your butter may be unpleasantly grainy.

Yields 5½ cups

- **3½ lb. ripe pears**
- **2½ lb. apples**
- **3 cups apple or pear cider**
- **1⅓ cups pure maple syrup**
- **¼ cup firmly packed light brown sugar**
- **1½ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **¼ tsp. ground cloves**
- **¼ tsp. table salt**
- **1 Tbs. lemon juice**
- **1½ tsp. pure vanilla extract**

Cut the pears into 1-inch chunks. Cut the apples in half or into quarters if large. Put the fruit and the cider in a very large pot (at least 7-quart capacity). Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, stirring frequently, until the fruit is very soft when pierced with a knife, 40 to 60 minutes. Take the pot off the heat.

Set a food mill fitted with a fine sieve disk over a large bowl. (For more on food mills, see Test Kitchen, p. 83.) Purée the fruit in small batches, discarding seeds and skins.

Wipe out any remaining seeds or peels from the pot and pour in the purée. Add the maple syrup, brown sugar, cinnamon, cloves, and salt. Stir until well blended.

Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low or medium low to maintain a simmer. Using a large spoon, skim off most of the foam that rises to the surface during the initial simmering.

Continue simmering, stirring often with an angled spatula, making sure to scrape the bottom, corners, and sides of the pot, until the purée becomes thick and dark and the bubbling becomes slow and laborious (more like volcanic burps than bubbles), 1¾ hours to 2¾ hours. Be sure to stir toward the end of cooking to avoid scorching. To test for doneness, spoon a dollop of the butter onto a small plate and refrigerate for a minute or two. It should hold its shape with no water separating out around its edge.

Remove the pot from the heat and add the lemon juice and vanilla, stirring until well blended. Transfer the butter to a container, let cool to room temperature, and then store, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks.

Note: For longer storage at room temperature, can the fruit butter. Transfer the hot butter to clean, hot canning jars, leaving ¼ inch of headspace in each jar, and follow the canning directions at FineCooking.com/extras, processing the butter for 10 minutes.

Abby Dodge is a Fine Cooking *contributing editor.*

Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Allison Ehri Kreitler



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BIG BUY COOKING

Fingerling Potatoes

Making the most of a favorite food find from a warehouse store. BY MELISSA PELLEGRINO

WHO KNEW YOU COULD BUY big bags of fingerling potatoes—those small, slender, somewhat finger-shaped spuds—in the produce section of your local warehouse store? They're such a tasty find. And we've got ideas to help you use them up—a hearty salad, a refined take on fish and chips, and a luscious braise. That's some pretty big flavor from some small potatoes.

The Big Buy

What: Fingerling potatoes (mixed varieties)
How much: 5-lb. bags
How to store: Potatoes should be stored in a cool, dark place, ideally between 45°F and 50°F. Never refrigerate raw potatoes because low temperatures will cause some of their starches to convert to sugars, which taste unpleasant and can lead to overbrowning during cooking. Smaller potatoes don't last as long as larger ones, so use fingerlings within a week, if you can. If they have begun to sprout, they are past their prime.



glazed fingerling potato salad with pancetta and warm mustard vinaigrette

Potatoes, crisp pancetta, and aged Gouda, along with some good-for-you greens, make for one delicious salad.
Serves 4

- **4 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- **¾ lb. fingerling potatoes (7 or 8 medium), quartered lengthwise**
- **Kosher salt**
- **2 oz. pancetta, cut into ¼-inch dice (⅓ cup)**
- **5 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **2 Tbs. finely chopped shallot**
- **3 Tbs. red wine vinegar**
- **1 tsp. Dijon mustard**
- **Freshly ground black pepper**
- **4 oz. escarole, torn into small pieces (6 cups)**
- **½ cup shaved aged Gouda (1½ oz.)**

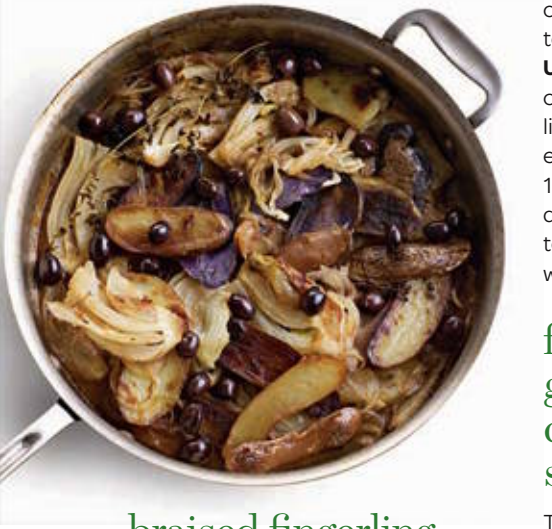
Melt 2 Tbs. of the butter in a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan over medium heat. Add the potatoes and enough water to just cover them (about 2 cups). Bring to a boil. Add 1 tsp. salt, cover the pan, reduce the heat to medium low, and cook, shaking the pan occasionally, until the potatoes are just tender, about 8 minutes. Uncover the pan, raise the heat to medium high, and add the remaining 2 Tbs. butter. Cook, shaking the pan occasionally, until all of the liquid has reduced to a glaze

Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Allison Ehri Kreitler

and the potatoes are lightly browned, about 20 minutes more.

Meanwhile, cook the pancetta in an 8-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate. Pour off any fat from the pan, return the pan to medium heat, and add ½ Tbs. of the oil. Add the shallot to the pan and cook, stirring, until tender, about 2 minutes. Stir in the vinegar and mustard and cook until the mustard is smooth, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Transfer the mixture to a small bowl and gradually whisk in the remaining 4½ Tbs. oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Put the escarole and pancetta in a large bowl and toss with 3 Tbs. of the vinaigrette. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide the salad and the potatoes among 4 salad plates and sprinkle with the cheese. Drizzle with the remaining vinaigrette and serve.



braised fingerling potatoes with fennel, olives, and thyme

This rustic side dish is great with roasted lamb or pork.

Serves 4

- **3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **¾ lb. fingerling potatoes (7 or 8 medium), cut lengthwise into ¼-inch-thick slices**
- **1 small bulb fennel, trimmed and halved lengthwise, then cut lengthwise into ½-inch-thick slices**
- **1 medium sweet onion, thinly sliced**
- **½ cup lower-salt chicken broth**
- **3 sprigs fresh thyme, plus 2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme for garnish**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **¼ cup pitted Niçoise olives**

Heat the oven to 375°F.

Heat 1½ Tbs. of the oil in a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the potatoes and ¼ tsp. salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes begin to brown, about 7 minutes. Transfer the potatoes to a plate.

Add the remaining 1½ Tbs. oil and the fennel to the pan with a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the onion to the pan and cook, stirring often, until starting to soften and lightly brown, 2 minutes more. Add the broth and bring to a boil. Gently nestle the potatoes into the fennel-onion mixture and add the thyme sprigs. Cover the pan and braise in the oven until the potatoes and fennel are tender, about 20 minutes.

Uncover the pan, add the olives, and continue to braise until most of the liquid has evaporated and the vegetables are meltingly tender, another 10 minutes. Remove from the oven, discard the thyme sprigs, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Garnish with the chopped thyme and serve.

fingerling potato galettes with chive crème fraîche and smoked trout

This elegant starter takes fish and chips to a whole new level.

Serves 4

- **8 oz. fingerling potatoes (about 5 medium)**
- **2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **¼ cup crème fraîche**
- **2 Tbs. thinly sliced fresh chives**
- **¼ tsp. finely grated lemon zest**
- **12 small, thin slices smoked trout (about 4 oz.)**

Heat the oven to 375°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with a nonstick baking liner or parchment.



Using a mandoline or a sharp knife, cut the potatoes lengthwise into 1/16-inch-thick slices. Soak the 40 nicest, most even slices in a large bowl of cold water until pliable, about 20 minutes.

Drain the potatoes and pat dry with paper towels. Put them in a medium bowl and toss with the oil, 1 tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper. Fan 10 potato slices into a 6-inch circle (like a flower) on the prepared sheet. Repeat with the remaining potato slices to make 4 individual circles. Cover the potatoes with parchment and set another baking sheet on top to keep the potatoes flat. Bake until tender, about 15 minutes. Remove the top baking sheet and the parchment and continue to cook until crisp and browned, 15 to 20 minutes more.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, whisk the crème fraîche, 1½ Tbs. of the chives, the lemon zest, ⅛ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper.

Carefully transfer the potato galettes to individual plates. Place one slice of trout on a potato circle. Add a dollop of crème fraîche, then another slice of trout, another dollop of crème fraîche, and a final slice of trout. Top with a small dollop of crème fraîche and garnish with some of the remaining chives and a grind of pepper. Repeat with the remaining galettes, trout, crème fraîche, chives, and pepper.



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GO SHOPPING

Great Finds

Our latest buys for the kitchen and table. BY DENISE MICKELSEN





Pop-Up Style

You'll have fun setting the table with these recycled paper placemats with pop-up cutouts. They do double-duty as place cards when you write your guests' names on them. Available in assorted styles, including scooter with groceries (shown). **$26 for a pack of 10 at publiqueshop.com; 415-305-1999.**

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The Low Down

Here's a kitchen fantasy (copper!) with a real purpose. Mauviel's new heavy-duty 12x16x2¼-inch shallow roasting pan has low sides for increased air flow around food, which promotes browning and crisping. The copper construction makes for superior heat conductivity, even cooking, and durability. **M'Heritage shallow roaster (copper and stainless steel), $450 at metrokitchen.com; 888-892-9911.**



Pour Pretty

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Fancy Foods

Sweet and savory vinegars, preserves, rubs, salts, sauces, teas, and cocoas are just some of the handmade items available from the Vervacious husband-and-wife team of Heidi and Mark Stanvick. We especially love the gingery sancho pepper sashimi dipping sauce and the delicate saffron fleur de sel. **From $7 to $19.50 at vervacious.com; 207-221-3590.**



Happy Chic

This colorful enamel and polished-nickel serving set from designer Jonathan Adler brings modern elegance and a touch of whimsy to your table. Available in blue, lime, and orange (shown). **Enamel serving set, $78 at jonathanadler.com; 800-963-0891.**



Joe to Go

Never settle for take-out coffee again with this handy French press and travel mug combo. Available in eight colors, including green (shown). **16-ounce Bodum travel press, $30 at bodumusa.com; 800-232-6386.**

Photographs by Scott Phillips, except travel mug, courtesy of the manufacturer

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Shown: greek salad with spinach & feta chicken sausage.



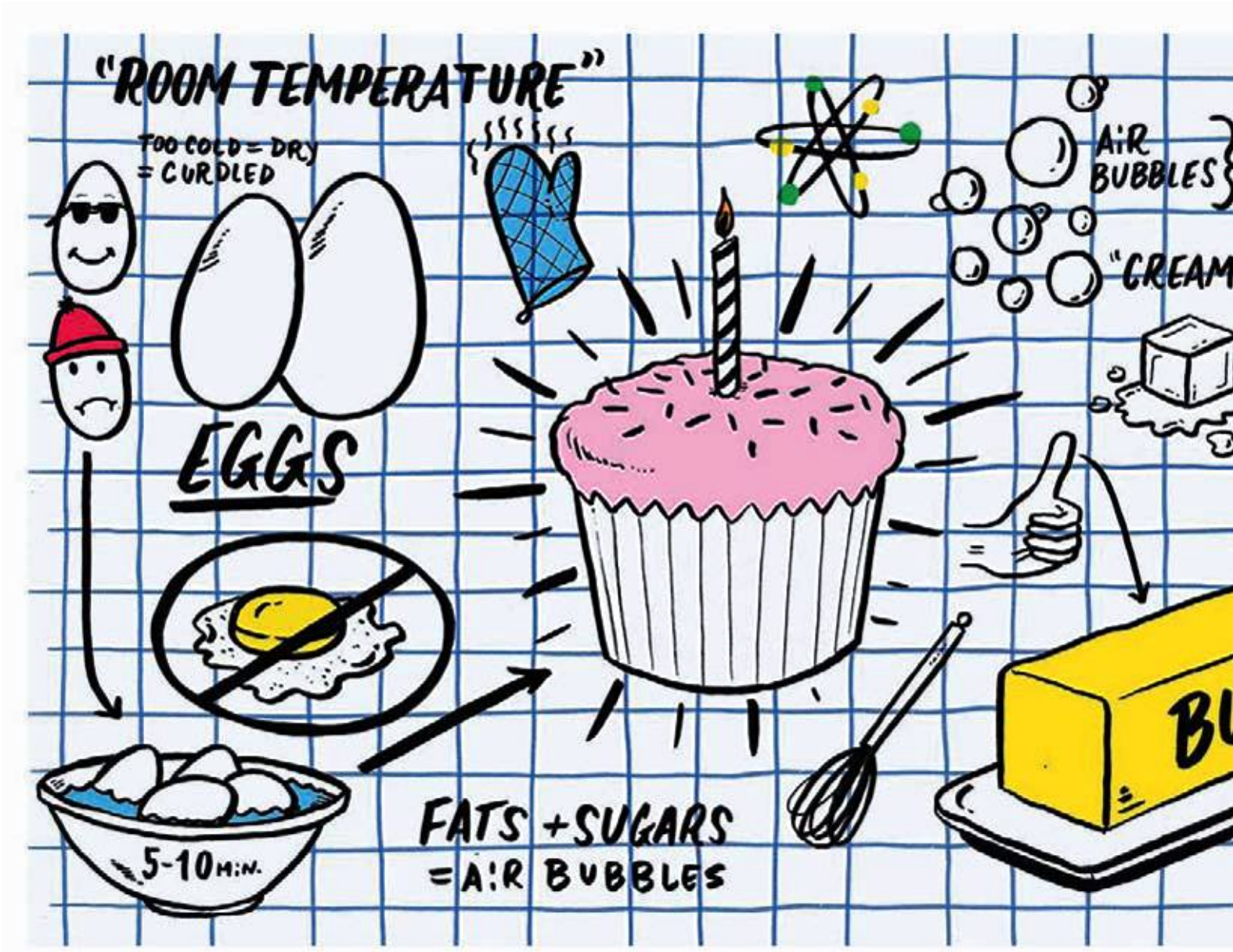
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THE SCIENCE OF

Ingredient Temperatures

Think it doesn't matter if your butter and eggs are room temperature or right out of the fridge? Think again. BY BRIAN GEIGER

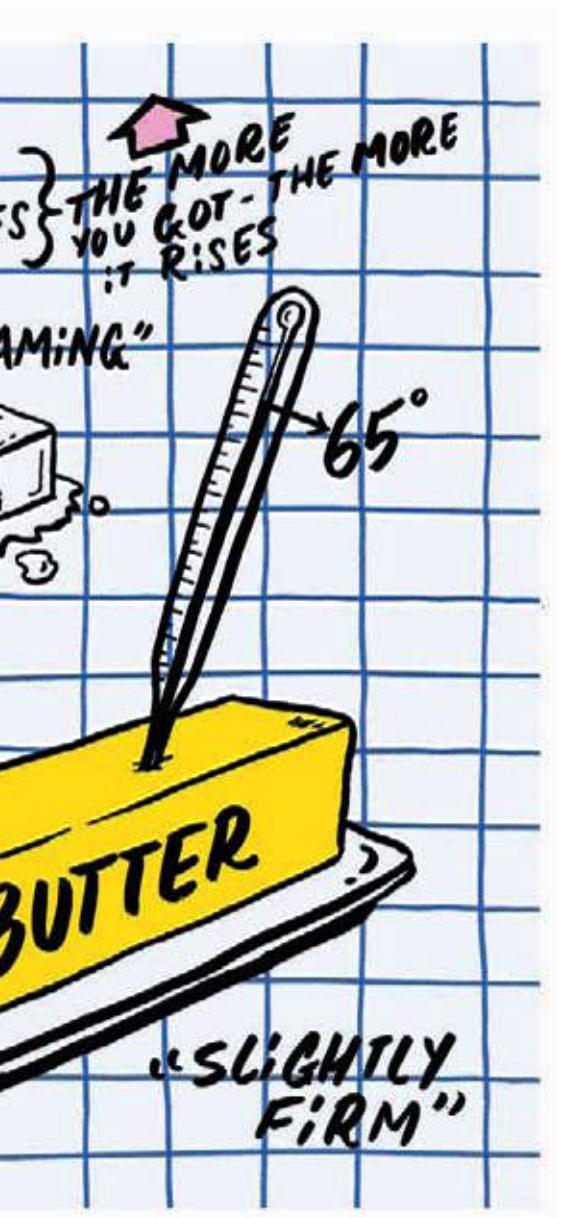
OCCASIONALLY, I AM IMPATIENT. I like to skip steps whenever I can, especially if those steps seem nonsensical. If it's time to make a cake, and the recipe says to let the ingredients come to room temperature before combining them, I used to think, "Come on. Surely there's no real reason I can't use the butter if it's a little firm?" Same with the eggs. Is moving them from the fridge to the countertop really going to make a difference?

When it comes to the science of baking, the answer is a resounding yes. Bake a cake with frigid butter and eggs and you'll end up with something resembling a pancake. That's why some recipes call for "room-temperature" ingredients, a frustratingly general concept, especially from a scientific point of view. Think about it: The temperature of a room varies wildly based on location, season, and availability of a heating or cooling system. There must be a smarter way to gauge the temperature, right?

Better lift with butter

Let's start by looking at what we want the butter and eggs to do. First at bat, butter. One of the things that distinguishes it from liquid fats like oil is that butter has the ability to hold air. Many cake and cookie recipes tell

Illustration by Joel Holland



you to beat sugar into butter "until light and fluffy," which creates air bubbles. (This is called the creaming method.) The more bubbles you have, the higher the confection will rise. If your butter is too cold, though, the fat and sugar won't mix, resulting in few bubbles. (Butter that's too warm isn't good either—it will melt, so the bubbles won't have any support and will disappear.)

Research shows that it's best to bake with butter that's about 65°F, which is actually cooler than room temperature in most homes. So how do you tell if your butter is the right temp? Short of using an instant-read thermometer in a stick of butter, I like to use the thumb method. I learned this from master baker Carole Walter, author of the cookbooks *Great Cakes* and *Great Cookies*. She suggests holding a wrapped stick of butter in your hand and pressing firmly with your thumb. There should be a slight indentation. She refers to this butter as "slightly firm," a more descriptive (and practical) phrase than "room temperature."

(A pie aside: If you're making a piecrust, though—as in the recipe on page 58—your butter needs are completely different. You want the butter very cold so that it remains in small solid pieces while being worked into the flour. These small pieces ensure a flaky crust, because they melt in the oven and leave steam pockets.)

The egg also raises

Eggs are also crucial in giving loft to baked goods. The white of the egg is 90 percent water and 10 percent protein; when you beat an egg, it's the protein that traps the air bubbles, and when incorporated into baked goods, these bubbles expand in the heat of the oven. Egg whites can be whipped up to eight times their volume, but this maximum air-trapping happens only when the eggs are warm; in warm eggs, the whites and yolks are looser, so it's easier to incorporate air into them (which is the whole point).

Warmer eggs are also better when you're mixing batter for cakes and cookies, because if you introduce cold eggs to a warmer butter-sugar mixture, the fat in the butter could harden. That would impede integration of the butter and eggs, which is why you're creaming them to begin with.

But you do want your eggs to be cold if you need to separate the whites and yolks. Cold eggs are easier to separate, so if your recipe calls for the yolks and whites to be separated, do it before warming the eggs.

Quick rescue

The good news is, if your eggs and butter are cold, it doesn't take long to bring them to a respectable baking temperature. With eggs, just fill a glass or bowl with warm water and submerge the eggs (in their shells) for 5 to 10 minutes. The water will bring the eggs up to temp in a hurry, with no risk of actually cooking them.

As for butter, some people like to stick it in the microwave, but I find that nuking does an uneven job. Instead, I cut the butter into smaller pieces (to increase its surface area), spread it on a plate or baking sheet, and leave it out on the counter. In about 20 minutes, it will be warm enough to bring your cakes to great heights.

Knowing the science behind ingredient temperatures makes me no less impatient when it comes time to mix up a cake. But knowing that cold eggs and butter will result in a dense, less tender cake tempers my haste—especially when the wait is shorter than an episode of *Firefly*.

Brian Geiger is a robotics project manager who was recently named the best piemaker in Charlottesville, Virginia. Follow his blog at FineCooking.com.

To chill or not to chill

Talk of leaving eggs or butter out at room temperature tends to raise red flags in the food safety department. Here's the straight story.

Butter can be left out on the counter (for easier spreading) without fear of food poisoning. However, most butter makers recommend refrigerating to maintain the best flavor. (It's pretty easy to spot rancid butter: It turns a deeper color and becomes less opaque.)

Eggs can carry salmonella, so the risks of not refrigerating are a bit higher. Markets in other countries regularly store eggs at room temperature, but the USDA recommends refrigerating them, because a colder temperature will inhibit the growth of bacteria. Since it's a simple matter of a quick soak in warm tap water to bring eggs in the shell up to temperature for baking (see Quick rescue, at left), it's best to keep them chilled.

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WOODBRIDGE

by Robert Mondavi



SPECIAL SECTION

How to Make Thanksgiving Dinner

Your holiday meal just got a lot easier. Consider this your all-in-one guide to making a delicious, stress-free dinner on the big day. Everything you need to know is right here—simple recipes for all the classics (think juicy roast turkey with pan gravy, bread stuffing, mashed potatoes, and cranberry sauce), plus a cook's toolbox, a handy timeline, and plenty of tips so you can pull it off like a pro. BY PAM ANDERSON



holiday classics

dry-rubbed roast turkey with pan gravy

cranberry sauce with caramelized onions

bread stuffing with fresh herbs

rustic mashed potatoes

(For more side dish ideas and desserts, see the Recipe Index, page 97)

dry-rubbed roast turkey with pan gravy

Master the basics—turkey, gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and mashed potatoes—and the rest will be easy. Trust us! Let the cooking begin with the big bird, which gets a salt rub. Leave it in the fridge overnight to season the meat and dry the skin so that it will get good and crisp. The gravy will come together while the cooked turkey rests.

Serves 12

- **½ cup finely chopped fresh sage**
- **2 Tbs. finely grated orange zest**
- **1 oz. kosher salt (¼ cup Diamond Crystal or 2 Tbs. Morton); more as needed**
- **Freshly ground black pepper**
- **1 12-lb. all-natural turkey**
- **2 large carrots, cut into 1- to 2-inch chunks**
- **2 medium celery stalks, cut into 1- to 2-inch chunks**
- **1 medium yellow onion, cut into 1- to 2-inch chunks**
- **1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more as needed**
- **½ cup dry white wine or vermouth**
- **1½ cups lower-salt chicken broth**
- **1⅛ oz. (¼ cup) all-purpose flour**

Season the turkey: In a medium bowl, mix the sage, zest, 1 oz. salt, and 1 Tbs. pepper. Remove the tail, neck, heart, and gizzard from the turkey and reserve for making turkey broth, if you like (go to FineCooking.com for a recipe). Discard the liver. Remove and discard the plastic timer and any metal or plastic leg holders. Rinse and pat the turkey dry. Rub the spice mixture under the turkey's skin over the entire breast 1, legs, and thighs, as well as in the cavity and over the wings. Set on a platter or pan large enough to hold the turkey and refrigerate uncovered overnight.

Roast the turkey: Position a rack in the bottom of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F. In a large bowl, toss the carrots, celery, and onion

Food styling by Allison Ehri Kreitler

Photographs by Scott Phillips



with the oil. Put half of the vegetables in the center of a large flameproof roasting pan and put the rest in the turkey cavity. Tuck the wings behind the turkey's neck and tie the legs together with twine. Set a V-rack in the roasting pan over the vegetables. Put the turkey breast side down on the V-rack. Roast for 1 hour. **Remove the pan** from the oven and baste the turkey back and sides with some of the pan drippings. With silicone oven mitts or two wads of paper towels, carefully turn the turkey breast side up and baste with more pan drippings. Continue to roast the turkey until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest





part of the thigh registers 175°F, an additional 1 to 1½ hours. During this phase, check the vegetables in the pan every 20 minutes or so: They should be brown, but if they or the drippings threaten to burn, add about ¼ cup water—you may need to do this several times. **When the turkey is done,** protect your hands with silicone oven mitts or wads of paper towels and tilt the turkey so the juices in the cavity run into the roasting pan. Transfer the turkey to a carving board and let it rest for 30 to 40 minutes. Carve when ready to serve.

Make the gravy: While the turkey is resting, set the roasting pan over medium-high heat. Add the wine and cook, using a wooden spoon or heatproof spatula to loosen the brown bits, until reduced by about half, 2 to 3 minutes. Strain the contents of the roasting pan into a bowl, pressing on the solids to release the flavorful drippings. Discard the solids.

In a 1-quart liquid measuring cup, combine the broth with 1½ cups water. Tasting as you go, add enough of the pan drippings to the broth to make a flavorful yet not overly salted liquid—you may or may not use all of the drippings. Let sit until the fat rises to the surface. Skim off and reserve as much fat as possible.

Measure 4 Tbs. of the fat into a medium saucepan (supplement with olive oil if necessary) over medium heat. Whisk in the flour. Cook, whisking almost constantly, for 2 to 3 minutes. Whisk in about ½ cup of the broth. As soon as the broth thickens, whisk in another ½ cup. Repeat until the mixture stays relatively smooth, at which point you can whisk in the remaining broth 2. Bring to a simmer and cook, whisking frequently, for 5 to 10 minutes to develop the flavor. The gravy will be on the thin side; if you prefer it thicker, continue simmering until thickened to your liking, but expect the flavor to concentrate as well. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour into a gravy boat and serve with the carved turkey.

T-Day Tip Sheet

Use an all-natural turkey. Avoid kosher birds (they're already brined and will be too salty) and "self-basting" birds (which are treated with fat solutions). Consider ordering your bird in advance.

Rub it in. Use an herb-zest-spice rub on the turkey for loads of extra flavor.

Let it rest. Let your turkey rest for 30 to 40 minutes before carving—the juices will redistribute into the meat, making it moist and tender. It also gives you time to finish preparing the meal.

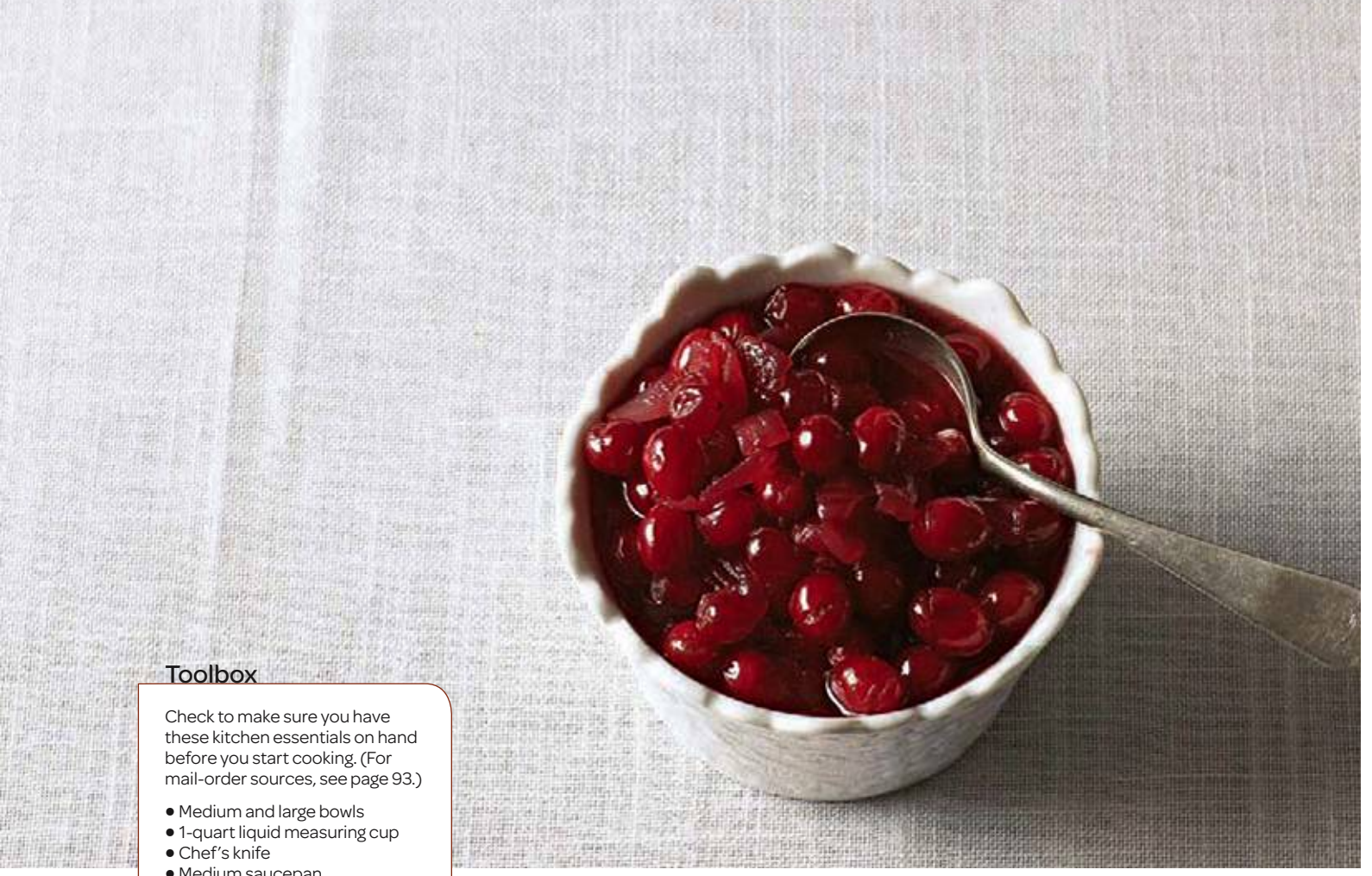
Get the lumps out. For lump-free gravy, gradually whisk the broth into the roux. The liquid will thicken quickly and get gluey, so keep whisking in more broth, a bit at a time, until the gravy is smooth.

Cool it. Let the cranberry sauce cool to room temperature before serving so it has time to thicken properly.

Dry the bread. For the best stuffing, let the bread dry overnight so it can absorb all the other delicious flavors that make it stuffing; toasting the bread also boosts flavor.

Use the right potato. Russets are your best choice for fluffy mashed potatoes, due to their high starch content. Keeping the skin on adds flavor, texture, and nutrients.

Ready for the advanced course? Try some variations on the recipes in this story (and find a recipe for homemade Turkey Broth) at FineCooking.com/extras.



Toolbox

Check to make sure you have these kitchen essentials on hand before you start cooking. (For mail-order sources, see page 93.)

- Medium and large bowls
- 1-quart liquid measuring cup
- Chef's knife
- Medium saucepan
- Sieve
- Large flameproof roasting pan
- V-rack
- Kitchen twine
- Baster
- Instant-read thermometer
- Carving board
- Wooden spoon or heatproof spatula
- Whisk
- Large rimmed baking sheet
- 12-inch skillet
- 3-quart baking dish
- 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan with lid
- 8-quart pot with lid
- Skewer or toothpick
- Food mill (see Test Kitchen, page 83), ricer, or stand mixer with paddle attachment

cranberry sauce with caramelized onions

Slow-cooked onions bring extra flavor to this simple sauce, and cloves add warmth.

Yields 2½ to 3 cups

- **1 Tbs. vegetable or canola oil**
- **1 large yellow onion, cut into medium dice**
- **⅛ tsp. ground cloves**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **1 12-oz. bag fresh or thawed frozen cranberries, rinsed and picked over (3½ cups)**
- **1 cup granulated sugar**

In a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan or skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onions, cloves, a pinch of salt, and a grind or two of pepper. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are golden-brown and very soft, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove the lid, increase the heat to medium high, and cook the onions, stirring often, until deep caramel-brown, an additional 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the cranberries, sugar, a pinch of salt, and ½ cup water and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Simmer for 1 minute, then cover, turn off the heat, and let cool to room temperature.

The sauce may be prepared up to 3 days ahead and refrigerated. Return to room temperature before serving.

The Dinner Plan

You can work through most of Wednesday and still get dinner on the table by Thursday evening. Shop on your way home, and then follow this easy timeline.

1 DAY AHEAD	6 HOURS AHEAD	3 HOURS AHEAD	2 HOURS AHEAD	1 HOUR AHEAD	30 MINUTES AHEAD
Season the turkey and make the cranberry sauce; refrigerate. Cut the bread cubes for the stuffing and let them dry overnight.	Toast the bread cubes and cook the onions and celery for the stuffing.	Begin roasting the turkey.	Make the mashed potatoes and keep them warm; let the cranberry sauce come to room temperature.	Finish and bake the stuffing.	Let the turkey rest; make the gravy.

bread stuffing with fresh herbs

Skip the packaged stuffing mix and use day-old bread and fresh herbs for great flavor.

Serves 12

- **1 lb. crusty Italian or French bread, cut into ½-inch cubes (10 to 12 cups)**
- **2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter; more for the pan**
- **2 medium-large yellow onions, cut into medium dice**
- **2 medium celery stalks (or 3 celery heart stalks), cut into medium dice (¾ cup)**
- **2 to 3 cups lower-salt chicken broth**
- **⅓ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- **1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh sage**
- **1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh thyme**
- **2 large eggs, lightly beaten**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

Spread the bread cubes in a single layer on a large rimmed baking sheet. Let dry overnight.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F. Bake the bread cubes until light golden-brown, 12 to 15 minutes.

Heat the butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onions and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft but not browned, 6 to 8 minutes. Let cool. (The recipe may be prepared to this point up to 6 hours ahead.)

In a large bowl, mix the bread cubes with the cooked vegetables, 2 cups of the broth, the parsley, sage, thyme, eggs, ¾ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper. If the liquid isn't immediately absorbed by the bread, toss occasionally for a few minutes until it is. If the liquid is immediately absorbed, toss in another ½ cup broth. The bread should be moist but not soggy. If necessary, add the remaining ½ cup broth.

Butter a 3-quart baking dish (13x9-inch works well). Transfer the bread mixture to the dish, cover with foil, and bake at 400°F until heated through, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove the foil and continue to bake until the top is slightly browned and crusty, about 20 minutes more.





rustic mashed potatoes

These are the real deal—creamy, buttery potatoes that get great texture from leaving the skins on. If you use a ricer or food mill (see Test Kitchen, p. 83, for more information on food mills) to mash the potatoes there will be small bits of skin in the finished dish. If you use a stand mixer, the skin will be in larger pieces.

Serves 12

- **5 lb. medium russet (Idaho) potatoes, scrubbed**
- **2½ cups half-and-half**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **5 oz. (10 Tbs.) butter, cut into ½-inch pieces and softened**

Put the whole unpeeled potatoes in an 8-quart pot and add enough water to cover. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer until the potatoes are tender when pierced with a skewer or toothpick, 25 to 30 minutes.

Cut the potatoes into chunks and pass them through a food mill or a ricer into a large heatproof bowl. Alternatively, put them in a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Cover the mixing bowl with a towel to contain any splashes and mix on low speed until mostly smooth, about 1 minute.

Add the half-and-half, 1 Tbs. salt, and 1 tsp. pepper and mix the potatoes by hand with a wooden spoon until smooth, light, and fluffy. Stir in the butter until melted. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To keep warm for up to 2 hours, cover the bowl with plastic wrap and set it over (but not in) a pan of barely simmering water.

Pam Anderson is a Fine Cooking *contributing editor.*

The Soup Solution

Starting a meal with a bowl of soup can help you stay healthy and eat less. Here's why. BY ELLIE KRIEGER

WHEN I EAT, I WANT TRUE SATISFACTION. I don't want to leave the table uncomfortably stuffed, but I definitely want to feel fed. I consider it a good thing that I have the appetite of a real, active woman (life's better when you love to eat). But I also want to continue to fit into my favorite jeans and, of course, stay healthy. One way to reconcile these seemingly conflicting desires is with soup. Really.

There is serious research showing that if you eat a bowl of vegetable soup before a meal, you wind up eating less overall and—here's the best part—you feel just as satisfied. That's because with a light soup as a starter, you begin to feel full before you get to the other courses, so you eat fewer calories without even trying (read: no diets). And you can do so deliciously.

For the biggest fill-factor with the lowest caloric impact, a chunky vegetable soup, served hot, is your best bet. It's high in water and fiber (both known to promote a sense of satiety), yet it's light and relatively low in fat (as opposed to cream-based soups, for example). Plus, its temperature compels you to eat it slowly, allowing your stomach the time it needs to tell your brain you're full. And hearty bites of vegetables—rather than puréed veggies—make you chew longer, which also contributes to feeling full.

Besides their clear health benefits, vegetable soups are the perfect canvas for what's in season. This time of year, I love to make hearty, warming soups using a variety of gorgeous fall vegetables, like the ones in this recipe. The foundation of onion and carrots is enhanced with chunks of butternut squash and ribbons of kale in a broth infused with herbs and spices. In two words: satisfaction guaranteed.



"There is serious research showing that if you eat a bowl of vegetable soup before a meal, you eat less overall and you feel just as satisfied," says Ellie.



Good to Know

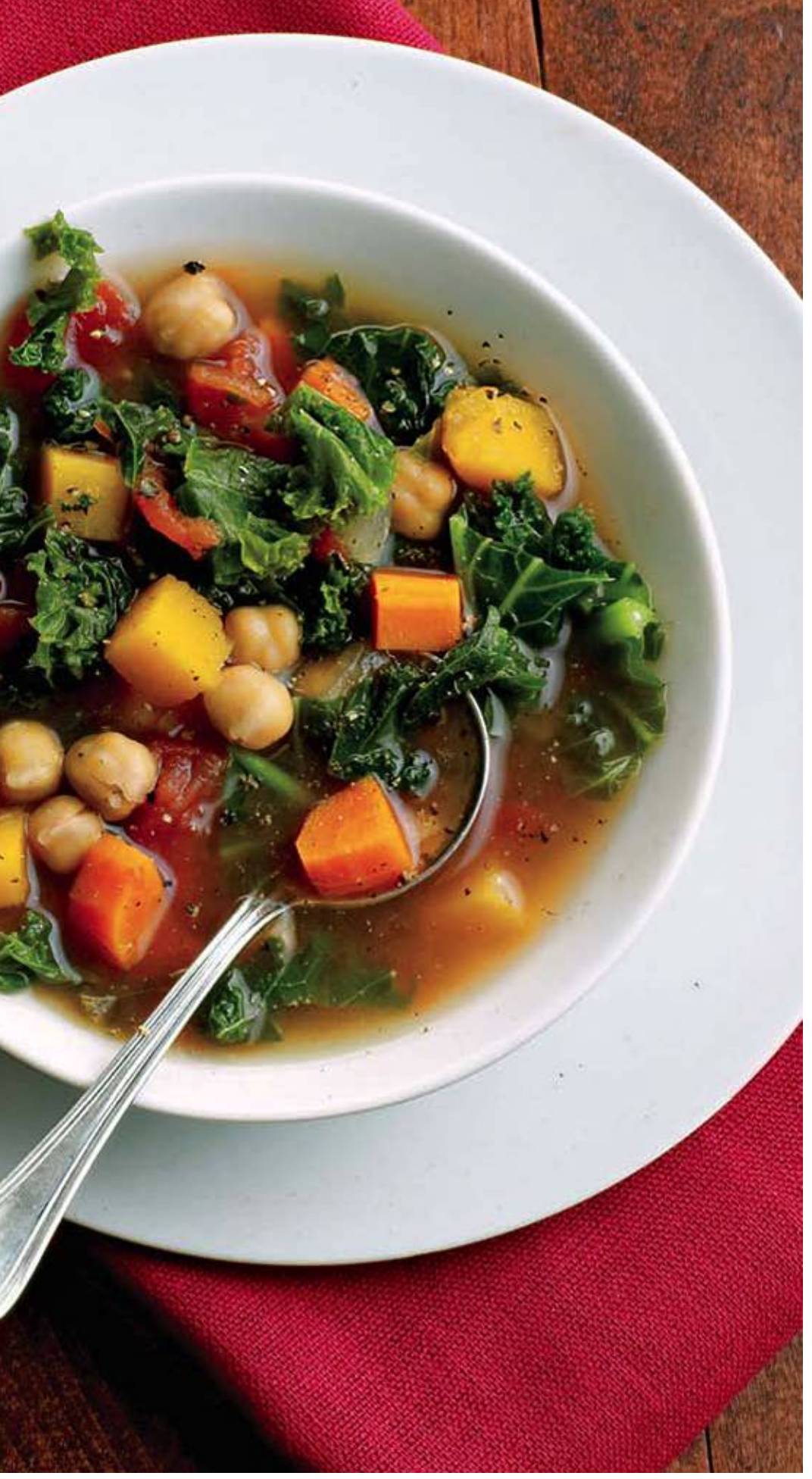
If you eat soup as a starter, you'll feel satisfied and eat less. Keep these guidelines in mind as you plan your meals:

Make it a vegetable soup. No high-fat meat or cream to keep the calorie count down.

Keep the veggies chunky. You'll need to chew longer, which will make you feel full more quickly.

Serve it hot. You'll eat more slowly, allowing your stomach time to tell your brain that you're full.

Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Allison Ehri Kreitler;



autumn vegetable soup

You can refrigerate this soup for 3 days or freeze for 2 months. Feel free to substitute other fall vegetables or beans.

Yields about 8 cups; serves 6 to 8 as a starter

- **2 Tbs. olive oil**
- **3 medium carrots, cut into medium dice**
- **1 large yellow onion, cut into medium dice**
- **2 medium cloves garlic, minced**
- **2 cups ½-inch-cubed peeled butternut squash (about half a 2-lb. squash)**
- **¼ tsp. ground allspice**
- **Pinch cayenne pepper; more to taste**
- **Kosher salt**
- **1 quart lower-salt chicken broth**
- **1 14.5-oz. can no-salt-added diced tomatoes**
- **4 sprigs fresh thyme**
- **2 cups lightly packed, coarsely chopped kale**
- **1 cup lower-salt canned chickpeas**

Heat the oil in a large soup pot over medium-high heat. Add the carrots and onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until they begin to soften, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute more. Add the squash, allspice, cayenne, and 1 tsp. salt and stir to combine. Add the broth, tomatoes with their juice, and thyme. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to medium, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the kale and the chickpeas and cook uncovered until the squash is tender and the kale has wilted, about 10 minutes more. Discard the thyme springs before serving. Season to taste with more salt and cayenne.

Registered dietitian Ellie Krieger is a Fine Cooking *contributing editor.*

hair and makeup by Nicole Bryl Make-Up New York; wardrobe by Julie Ewald

Remote Probe Thermometers

You'll always know when dinner is done with this handy kitchen tool. Here are our top picks.

BY NICKI PENDLETON WOOD

COOKING WITHOUT A THERMOMETER is like driving somewhere you've never been without a map (or more likely, a GPS). A thermometer takes all the guesswork out of knowing when food is properly cooked. And unlike using an instant-read thermometer, with a probe thermometer you don't have to open the oven door (which allows heat to escape) or poke multiple holes in your food (which lets flavorful juices leak out) to check for doneness.

What it is A probe thermometer consists of a thin metal rod (a probe) that's connected by a wire to a digital display. Insert the probe into the food, shut the oven door, set the display on the counter, and you're free to turn your attention elsewhere.

What it can do Most remote probe thermometers detect temperatures between 32°F and 392°F. An alarm (or series of alarms) tells you when your food is cooked to its target temperature. Some models include timers, and some have pre-programmed temperature settings for different meat types (set to USDA standards). Depending on the model's temperature range, consider using it for more-diverse kitchen tasks like candy-making, frying in oil, and even calibrating your oven.

What to look for For optimal control, choose a thermometer that has a manual setting or allows for variations in doneness. Models with magnetized displays that can be propped up (for easy reading on a countertop) or lie flat (for sticking to an appliance) are good. Among the many we tested, here are our favorites.

how we tested

We evaluated 14 remote probe thermometers for design, construction, functionality, and extra features. We conducted side-by-side tests to monitor the temperature of ice water and boiling water, large pieces of cooked meat and poultry, hot oil for frying, and baked bread.



TOP OF THE LINE

CDN 2-in-1 Probe Thermometer 2P212

$30; kitchenkapers.com

This model is perfect for the gadget-loving cook. Extra features abound: a pre-set list of meat types (options include duck and even ground veal), preferred "taste" settings from rare to well done (although this isn't available for pork, chicken, turkey, and ground meats; the manual setting from 32°F to 212°F lets you bypass this), and a color-coded display that shows how your food is progressing, from rare to well done. An early alert sounds 10 minutes before the food reaches the target temperature. There's another alert when it reaches its target and a third when the food is overcooked. There is also a programmable memory option. Two probes are included—one instant-read probe that folds out of the unit (great for grilling) and one remote probe for oven cooking. This model is unique in that it's backlit for nighttime cooking and has a generous five-year warranty.



Photographs by Scott Phillips

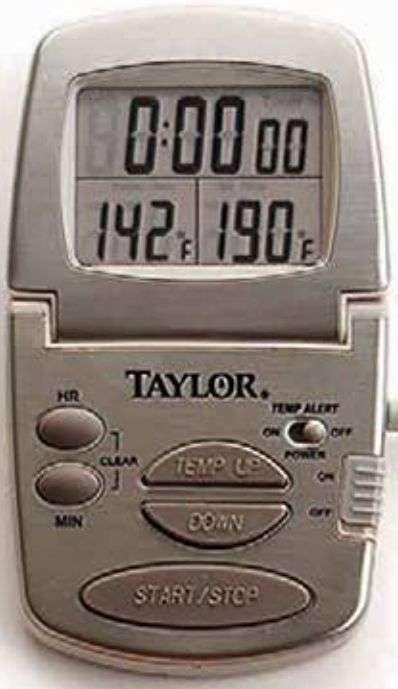
NEW AND IMPROVED ▼

ThermoWorks Electronic Cooking Thermometer/ Timer TW362B

$21; amazon.com

ThermoWorks has updated its probe thermometer/timer. Responding to customer feedback, it has added an on/off switch to preserve battery life and modified the housing, which now props up the display for good visibility from a counter or lies flat for mounting on the side of the oven. With a temperature range of 32°F to 392°F, it's up to most common kitchen tasks, and the timer is a bonus. This model does not have pre-programmed temperatures for different foods. It comes with a one-year warranty.





IN STYLE ▲

Taylor Gourmet Digital Cooking Thermometer with Probe and Timer

$21; target.com

If you're looking for a thermometer that gets the job done and looks good while doing it, then this is the model for you. The big stainless-steel display offers easy reading in dim light and from a distance, and its heft gives it a sturdy, reliable feel. The functioning is intuitive, the temperature range is a standard 32°F to 392°F, and it has a countdown timer with alarm as well as a one-year warranty.

BEST BUY ▼

Acu-Rite Digital Meat Thermometer 0993 STW

$14; found at Walmart stores

Not only does it come at a bargain price, but this model is intuitive enough to use straight out of the box. It measures degrees to a decimal point for added precision and has an impressive temperature range: –40°F to 572°F. There are no pre-programmed temperature settings. An alarm sounds when the thermometer hits its target temperature, both on the way up and on the way down—a useful feature for more-complex tasks like tempering chocolate or regulating frying oil temperatures before and after adding food to the oil. The auto-shutoff feature is a standout, too—more thermometers should have it to preserve battery life. The probe is dishwasher-safe, and the silicone wire stays cool to the touch. The only shortcomings on this model are its bulky wedge shape and a magnet too weak to securely attach to the oven door. It comes with a one-year warranty.



Nicki Pendleton Wood is a cookbook editor and equipment tester based in Nashville.



Montsant Rising

Red wines from the Montsant region are the next big thing from Spain (watch out, Priorat). So get drinking now, while the prices are still low and the quality just keeps getting better. BY DOUG FROST



Illustration by Marta Antelo; photographs by Scott Phillips

THERE IS A SOAP OPERA PLAYING out in the Catalonian mountains of Spain. It's a case of sibling rivalry—a feud between the Priorat wine region, the crowned royalty of Spanish red wine, and its overlooked brother, Montsant. Priorat is one of only two regions in Spain with DOC (Denominación de Origen Calificada) classification, the country's highest honor. Montsant is a relatively new and unsung DO (Denominación de Origen) region, fighting for its due from the world's red wine drinkers. Priorat thinks its wines reign supreme. Montsant fans beg to differ. After all, Montsant shares climate, soil, grapes, and viticulture with Priorat, but little of its fame and fortune.

A star is born

Ten years ago, and for the previous century or two, the Rioja region was the king of Spanish reds. Things began to change in the late 1990s, when Priorat muscled its way into the ranks of the royals as its new vintners began making some of Spain's most powerful red wines. Guided by a small group of energetic 20-somethings, Priorat's wines were transformed from bulk, oxidized, fruitless stinkers into modern dandies. The young winemakers, sometimes even the children of the families who started the wineries, worked tirelessly to improve production methods, making small-batch, high-quality wines filled with rich, fresh fruit. The hand-tending of vines on the steep slopes of Priorat was back-breaking work, but it got the wines noticed.

In 2004, when Priorat was awarded its DOC status, it pushed fusty Rioja aside in an enological coup d'etat. In a decade or so, Priorat earned what had taken Rioja nearly two centuries to achieve: acclaim as Spain's representative to the pantheon of the world's great red wines.

Priorat's ascension caused no end of jealous teeth-gnashing and hair-pulling in other aspirational wine regions, like Ribera del Duero to the northwest. Priorat's closer neighbors were affected, too—nearby towns with political clout and proven winemaking skills managed to remain a part of the Priorat region, but other areas with lesser reputations or bulk wine operations were cleaved away and added to a new wine region called Montsant. This new region, established in 2001, gathered together the vineyards surrounding Priorat in a wide loop.

In the shadows

Today, Montsant remains in the shadow—literally and metaphorically—of the lofty Priorat vineyards. Montsant's insistence that its terroir is little different from Priorat's is dismissed by some, applauded by others. The fact of the matter is that while Montsant's vineyards might not be as starkly picturesque as Priorat's, Montsant has a lot of the same old, gnarled, wizened vines of Garnacha and Cariñena grapes that make for big, bold reds. It also has some newer transplants: Caber-

net, Merlot, and Syrah, which make for very exciting, complex wines that rival Priorat's best offerings.

Kinder, gentler wines

Many of Montsant's vineyards consist of the same *llicorella* (slate) soils as Priorat's, but with some limestone, sand, and clay thrown in the mix. This soil gives the wines great flinty character and minerality. And Montsant's elevation—between 1,500 and 2,000 feet—means that its wines, while big and bold, are not as relentlessly powerful as Priorat's (which boasts elevations as high as 3,000 feet). But that's merely an issue of degree, or perhaps temperament. If Priorat is a marauding Godzilla, Montsant is more like King Kong gently holding Fay Wray.

Since Montsant's wines rarely evince the bombast and firepower of its DOC neighbor, and often have lower alcohol levels, too, they are better suited for enjoying with food—when a little bombast goes a long way. Montsant wines function at the table the same way many Zinfandels do, but with a gentler demeanor and a typically tart finish that's very refreshing. This means that the wines complement a larger palette of foods, both bold and understated, like seafood, duck, steak, lamb, cheeses, and even pizza.

The next big thing

Slightly lower elevation is one reason Montsant wines cost less than those from Priorat—the land is a bit easier to work. Mixed soil is another reason, and DO status is yet another. But because Montsant is the next big thing in Spanish red wine, for now, prices are low and the quality is only getting better. Sure, the top wines of the area, such as Celler Capçanes Cabrida (an intense yet well-balanced old-vine Garnacha), will set you back $75, but many well-made bottles from the region cost less than $30, and there are plenty for less than $20.

Montsant is still 10 or 20 years behind Priorat in transforming and modernizing its wineries. But the terroir, the grapes, and the promise are there—given a few years and dedication from the local winemakers, there is a good chance that Montsant will join Priorat on the throne of DOC royals. Until then, Montsant continues to shine in the reflected glory of its famous big brother, Priorat, at more comfortable prices. Which is why, if you're looking for amazing value in the world of wine, you should look to Spain. And within Spain, look to Montsant.

Doug Frost is a wine consultant and writer based in Kansas City, Missouri.

Montsant: A Buyer's Guide

To fully discover what Montsant has to offer, consider trying reds that range from bright and fruity to dark and earthy.

RICH, FRUITY, AND BRIGHT

La Cova dels Vins Ombra 2007 ($17) Take one-third each of Cariñena, Garnacha, and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes, and you end up with a very pretty, supple Montsant wine.

Celler de Capçanes Mas Donis 2007 ($13) An incredible bargain from one of Montsant's top producers, this wine, made from old-vine Garnacha with a dollop of Syrah, bursts with tart fruit.

Acústic Montsant 2007 ($16) Bright and full of juicy red berry flavors, this is a delicious wine made with old-vine Cariñena and Garnacha grapes.

Celler Laurona Montsant 2004 ($35) Black cherries and spice feature in this very elegant blend of Garnacha, Merlot, Syrah, and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Can Blau 2007 ($14) This wine showcases the rich, supple side of Montsant. A blend of Cariñena, Syrah, and Garnacha, it has the full complement of the region's traditional grapes and a little dose of modern Syrah, too.

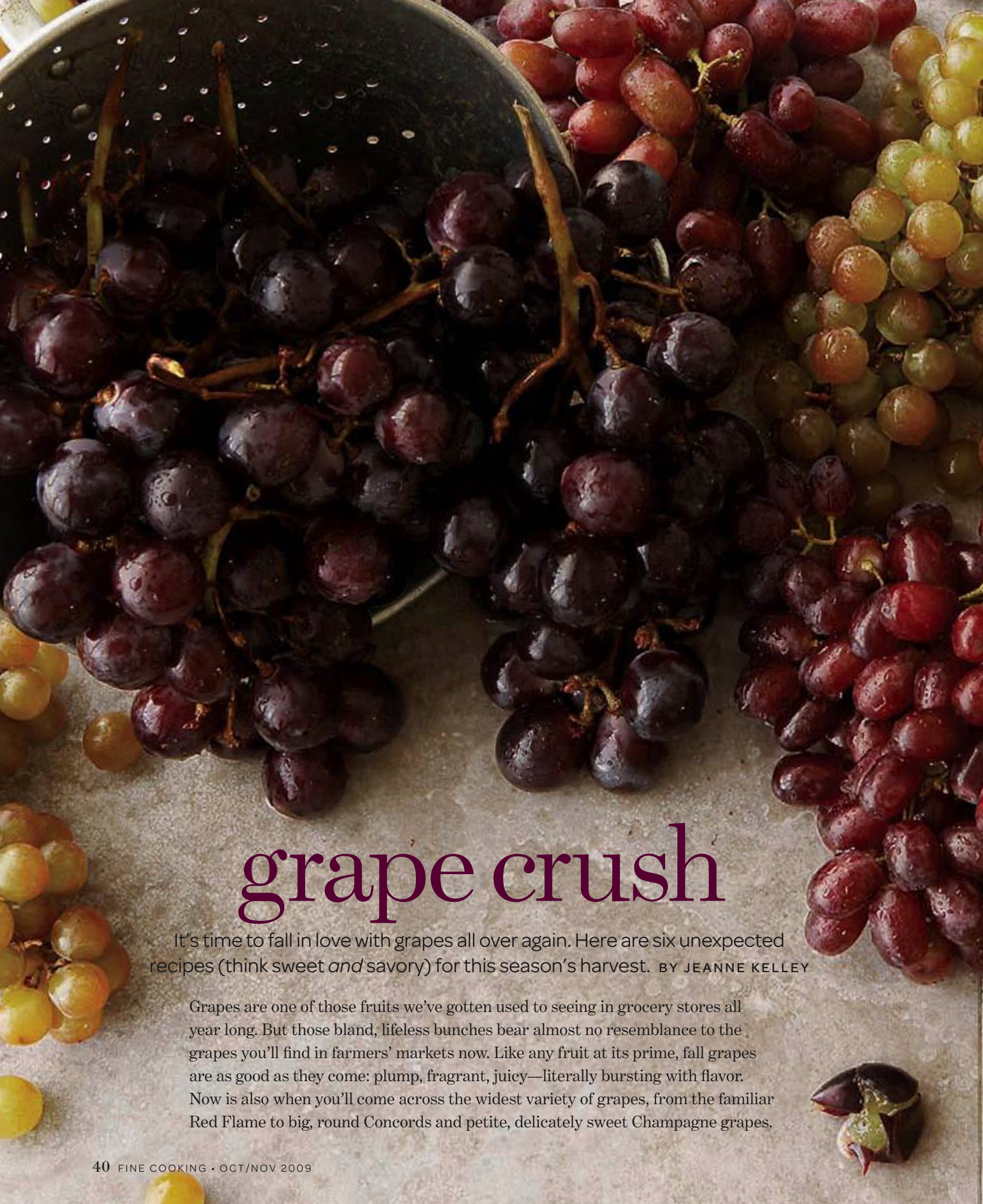
DARK AND EARTHY

Agricola Falset-Marça Etim Selección 2006 ($15) One of the hidden secrets of Montsant (and a great value to boot), this wine is made from half Garnacha and half a blend of Cariñena and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Masroig Les Sorts Vinyes Velles 2005 ($35) Made from 50 percent Cariñena, 35 percent Garnacha, and 15 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, this is a chocolatey, earthy wine with raisin and smoky barrel notes.

Venus la Universal Dido 2007 ($33) An intense, earthy wine made from Garnacha, Cabernet, and Merlot, from the brilliant winemaker Sara Perez, daughter of Josep Lluís Pérez, one of Priorat's star vintners during the 1990s.





grape crush

It's time to fall in love with grapes all over again. Here are six unexpected recipes (think sweet *and* savory) for this season's harvest. BY JEANNE KELLEY

Grapes are one of those fruits we've gotten used to seeing in grocery stores all year long. But those bland, lifeless bunches bear almost no resemblance to the grapes you'll find in farmers' markets now. Like any fruit at its prime, fall grapes are as good as they come: plump, fragrant, juicy—literally bursting with flavor. Now is also when you'll come across the widest variety of grapes, from the familiar Red Flame to big, round Concords and petite, delicately sweet Champagne grapes.



Photographs by Scott Phillips



frisée and grape salad with verjus and blue cheese

Use a colorful assortment of grapes for this elegant salad. Verjus is pressed unfermented juice from unripe grapes (for more information, see Test Kitchen, p. 83).

Serves 4 to 6

- **3 Tbs. verjus**
- **2 Tbs. grapeseed oil**
- **1½ Tbs. finely chopped shallot**
- **8 cups lightly packed baby frisée or mixed salad greens, separated into leaves**
- **2 cups mixed grapes, halved, and seeded if necessary**
- **½ cup crumbled blue cheese, such as Point Reyes or Maytag (about 2 oz.)**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

In a salad bowl, whisk the verjus and the oil. Add the shallot and let sit for 5 minutes. Add the frisée, grapes, and cheese and toss to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

bulgur and grape salad with walnuts and currants

This wholesome whole-grain side dish is great with roast chicken or lamb. Enjoy it as is or with a crumble of goat cheese.

Yields about 5 cups; serves 6

- **1 cup medium bulgur wheat**
- **1 cup seedless red grapes, cut in halves or quarters, depending on size, or Champagne grapes**
- **1 cup small-diced celery (about 3 stalks)**
- **⅓ cup chopped toasted walnuts**
- **¼ cup packed coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- **3 Tbs. dried currants**
- **3 Tbs. walnut oil, preferably roasted**
- **3 Tbs. white balsamic vinegar**
- **2 Tbs. minced shallot**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

In a small saucepan, bring 1 cup water to a boil over high heat. Stir in the bulgur, remove from the heat, cover, and let sit until the water is completely absorbed and the bulgur is tender and cooled to room temperature, about 1 hour. Transfer to a large bowl. Add the grapes, celery, walnuts, parsley, currants, walnut oil, vinegar, shallot, and ½ tsp. salt; toss well. Season to taste with more salt and pepper.



Grapes: A Buyer's Guide

Some of the recipes here call for specific types of grapes, but feel free to substitute whatever looks best at the market. Here's a quick roundup of the most common table grape varieties.



Red Flame grapes are sweet in flavor with a crunchy texture. They're ideal for both eating out of hand and cooking, as they keep their shape well and acquire a deeper flavor when heated.



Concord grapes have thick skins, juicy flesh, large seeds, and a strong strawberry-like flavor. They come in purple and white varieties and are ideal for juices and jellies.



Champagne grapes have delicate, sweet, pea-size berries that need gentle handling. These seedless grapes are not used in the homonymous French sparkling wine but are so named because they're thought to resemble tiny bubbles.

Green Thompson grapes are the top seller at the supermarket. Large and seedless, they have firm skins that make them very durable. Their mild flavor pairs well with citrus.



Muscat grapes usually have seeds and come in black and white varieties. Prized for their honey-floral flavor and perfume, they're used for both eating (they're delicious with cheese) and making wine.



Autumn Royal grapes have large, oval-shaped black berries. Sweet and straightforward, these seedless grapes pair well with salty foods like prosciutto and salted nuts.



Food styling by Kevin Crafts



duck breast with saba and grapes

Reduced grape must (saba) boosts the grape flavor in this rich, sweet sauce (for more information on saba, see Test Kitchen, p. 83). Serve with wilted spinach and roasted turnips or potatoes.

Serves 4

- **4 small or 2 large boneless duck breasts (1¾ to 2 lb. total)**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **1½ cups seedless Autumn Royal or other purple or red grapes**
- **¼ cup minced shallot**
- **½ cup dry white wine**
- **1 cup lower-salt chicken broth**
- **3 Tbs. saba**
- **1 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**

With a sharp knife, score the duck skin in a diamond pattern, being careful not to cut all the way through to the meat. Season the duck all over with salt and pepper. Put the duck skin side down in a cold 12-inch skillet. Cook over medium heat without moving, spooning off the excess fat occasionally, until the skin becomes light golden-brown, 8 to 9 minutes.

Loosen the duck from the pan with a spatula. Raise the heat to medium high and continue cooking, skin side down, until the skin is thin, crisp, and browned, about 4 minutes. Turn the duck and continue cooking until an instant-read thermometer registers 135°F in the thickest part of a breast for medium rare, about 10 minutes more. Transfer the duck to a plate.

Pour off all but 1 Tbs. of the fat from the skillet. Add the grapes and cook over medium-high heat, stirring often, until lightly browned but still firm, about 3 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the grapes to the plate with the duck. Add the shallot to the skillet and cook until slightly softened, about 1 minute. Add the wine and cook, stirring up the browned bits, until all the liquid evaporates, 2 to 4 minutes. Add the chicken broth and saba and boil until the mixture reduces to ⅔ cup, 5 to 6 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add the grapes, duck, and any juices from the plate to the skillet. Simmer gently for about 1 minute, turning the duck to coat it with the sauce. Thinly slice the duck and divide it among 4 plates. Spoon the sauce and grapes over the duck. Sprinkle with the parsley and serve immediately.

moroccan-spiced seared scallops with green grape and lemon relish

Lemon zest cooked in salt water brings the flavor of preserved lemons to this succulent relish. Serve as a small plate or a light main course.

Serves 4

- **1 medium lemon**
- **Kosher salt**
- **1½ cups seedless green grapes, quartered lengthwise and at room temperature**
- **¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **2 scallions, thinly sliced**
- **2 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro**
- **2 Tbs. chopped fresh mint**
- **1 tsp. ground cumin**
- **1 tsp. sweet Hungarian paprika**
- **1 tsp. ground turmeric**
- **¼ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **¼ tsp. ground ginger**
- **1½ lb. large all-natural "dry" sea scallops, side muscles removed**
- **Freshly ground black pepper**

Using a vegetable peeler, remove the zest from the lemon in strips (yellow part only). Reserve the lemon. In a small saucepan, combine the lemon zest with ½ cup water and 1 tsp. salt. Bring to a simmer over medium-low heat and cook until the liquid reduces to about 1 Tbs., about 10 minutes. Drain, rinse, drain again, and pat dry. Finely mince the lemon zest and combine it with the grapes, 2 Tbs. of the olive oil, scallions, cilantro, and mint in a medium bowl.

In a small bowl, combine the cumin, paprika, turmeric, cinnamon, and ginger.

Pat the scallops dry. Season them liberally with salt and pepper and coat them with the spice mixture.

Heat 1 Tbs. of the olive oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add half of the scallops and cook, turning once, until seared on the outside but still translucent in the center, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a warm plate. Repeat with the remaining 1 Tbs. oil and scallops.

Divide the scallops among 4 plates and serve with the relish. Cut the reserved lemon into quarters and squeeze over the scallops and relish. Serve immediately.

For sources, see Where to Buy It



Shop and Store

Try to find plump-looking grapes that have intact skins and are firmly attached to their stems. Store them in the refrigerator in a plastic or paper bag without washing them. They should last about a week. When ready to eat or use in a dish, wash grapes in a colander under running water.



custard tart with wine-poached grapes

Sweet, citrusy custard and a nutty almond crust make a perfect backdrop for the tender poached grapes in this elegant dessert.

Serves 8

FOR THE CRUST

- 3½ oz. (7 Tbs.) chilled unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces; more for the pan
- 3⅜ oz. (¾ cup) unbleached all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup toasted, slivered almonds
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ½ tsp. table salt
- 1 large egg yolk, chilled

FOR THE FILLING

- 2 large eggs
- 2 large egg yolks
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 3 Tbs. fresh lime juice
- 3 Tbs. dry white wine, preferably Sauvignon Blanc
- ½ cup heavy cream

FOR THE TOPPING

- ½ cup dry white wine, preferably Sauvignon Blanc
- 2 Tbs. honey
- 2 Tbs. granulated sugar
- 1 Tbs. fresh lime juice
- 65 seedless red grapes (2¼ cups)

MAKE THE CRUST

Butter a 4x13½-inch rectangular fluted tart pan with a removable bottom. Combine the flour, almonds, sugar, and salt in a food processor and process until the almonds are finely chopped, about 40 seconds. Add the butter and pulse until the mixture resembles coarse meal, about 15 seconds. Add the egg yolk and process until moist clumps form. With lightly floured hands, press the dough evenly over the bottom and up the sides of the prepared tart pan. Freeze until firm, about 45 minutes.

Position a rack in the center of the oven, put a rimmed baking sheet on the rack, and heat the oven to 375°F. Bake the crust on the heated baking sheet until light golden on the bottom and golden-brown on the edges, about 15 minutes. Cool completely.

MAKE THE FILLING

In a medium heavy-duty saucepan, whisk the eggs, yolks, sugar, lime juice, and white wine until well blended. Cook over medium-high heat, whisking frequently, until the mixture boils and thickens, about 3 minutes. Transfer the filling to a medium bowl and let cool until warm.

Whisk the cream into the filling and pour the mixture into the baked tart shell. Bake at 375°F until the filling begins to slightly puff and bubble around the edges, about 15 minutes. Let cool to room temperature.



MAKE THE TOPPING

In a medium heavy-duty saucepan, boil the wine, honey, sugar, and lime juice over medium heat until the mixture reduces to a thick syrup and begins to darken slightly, 4 to 5 minutes—you should have about ¼ cup. Reduce the heat to low, add the grapes, cover, and poach gently over low heat until tender, about 3 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the grapes to a dinner plate. Continue to boil the poaching liquid until syrupy, about 1 minute. Randomly place the grapes on top of the tart, pressing slightly into the filling. Gently brush the glaze over the grapes. Let the tart cool completely at room temperature for at least 4 hours before serving.

Get information on hundreds of ingredients at FineCooking.com/ingredients.

braised chicken with gewürztraminer and grapes

Serve with brown rice or egg noodles and steamed green beans.

Serves 6

- **1 Tbs. olive oil**
- **12 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs, trimmed (about 3½ lb. total)**
- **Kosher salt**
- **1½ cups red or green seedless grapes or Muscat grapes**
- **2 cups finely chopped yellow onion**
- **2 medium cloves garlic, chopped**
- **1 750-ml bottle medium-dry Gewürztraminer**
- **2 cups lower-salt chicken broth**
- **1 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme or 1 tsp. dried, crumbled**
- **½ cup heavy cream**
- **2 tsp. cornstarch**
- **Freshly ground black pepper**

Heat the oil in a 7- to 8-quart enameled Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Season the chicken generously with salt. Working in batches so as not to crowd the pan, sear the chicken, turning once, until golden-brown, 10 to 12 minutes per batch. Transfer the chicken to a large bowl.

When all the chicken is browned, pour off all but 2 Tbs. of fat. Add the grapes and cook until just tender, about 3 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the grapes to a small bowl. Reduce the heat to medium and add the onions and a pinch of salt to the pan. Cook, stirring frequently, until tender, about 7 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, to soften, 1 to 2 minutes. Pour in the wine and simmer, stirring up the browned bits on the bottom of the pan, until the wine reduces by almost half, about 5 minutes.

Return the chicken to the pan, along with any accumulated juices. Add the broth and sprinkle with thyme. Bring to a simmer, reduce the heat to medium low, cover, and cook until the chicken is very tender, about 25 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a bowl.

Raise the heat to medium high and boil the liquid until reduced to about 2½ cups, about 12 minutes. In a small bowl, whisk the cream with the cornstarch, then whisk the cream mixture into the sauce. Cook, whisking constantly, until the sauce simmers and thickens to the consistency of heavy cream, 1 to 2 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Return the chicken to the pan. Simmer gently over medium-low heat until the chicken is heated through. Stir in the reserved grapes. The chicken skin will be soft—remove it prior to serving, if desired.

Note: This dish can be prepared 2 days ahead; cool, cover, and refrigerate the chicken and grapes separately.

Jeanne Kelley is a food writer, recipe developer, and food stylist who lives near Los Angeles. Her latest cookbook is Blue Eggs and Yellow Tomatoes. ◘





No changes to the classic Thanksgiving table allowed—except for the side dishes. Here, the familiar green bean casserole gets a new look with cremini mushrooms, sage, and pancetta.



flip sides

Modern makeovers for some favorite Thanksgiving side dishes—from creamed onions to sweet potato casserole. BY SUSIE MIDDLETON

AT THANKSGIVING, NOSTALGIA RULES. If you're not careful to serve all the usual suspects, you'll hear cries of "Where's the sweet potato casserole?" "What about the green beans?" "But we always have glazed carrots!" As a cook, you're stuck between a rock and your desire to have fun in the kitchen trying new things.

Here's a plan that'll satisfy your craving for fresh flavors without letting anyone down. (And no, we're not suggesting you give up the turkey or mashed potatoes.) We've taken six traditional Thanksgiving side dishes and given them modern makeovers. So everyone wins: Cooks are happy that they can play a little, and guests get to have their favorites—just better.

THE TRADITION
green bean casserole

green beans with crispy pancetta, mushrooms, and shallots

The onion-topped green bean casserole is a Thanksgiving mainstay. This version, while full of familiar flavors, is a bit more elegant, and dare we say it, a lot more flavorful.

Serves 8

- **Kosher salt**
- **1½ lb. green beans, trimmed**
- **2½ oz. thinly sliced pancetta (five or six 1/16- to 1/8-inch-thick slices)**
- **3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **6 medium cremini mushrooms, trimmed, halved if large, and very thinly sliced**
- **2 medium-large shallots, halved lengthwise and very thinly sliced**
- **¼ cup very thinly sliced fresh sage leaves**
- **1 Tbs. sherry vinegar**
- **½ tsp. Dijon mustard**

Fill a large mixing bowl with ice cubes and water and set aside. Fill a 6- or 7-quart pot two-thirds full of well-salted water. Bring the water to a boil and boil the beans uncovered until tender to the bite, 4 to 6 minutes. Drain, transfer to the bowl of ice water, and let sit until cooled, about 2 minutes. Drain and pat dry.

Put the pancetta in a 12-inch nonstick skillet and cook over medium-low heat until crisp and browned, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate and coarsely crumble. Remove the pan from the heat and let it cool slightly.

Add 2 Tbs. of the olive oil to the pan and return it to medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms, shallots, and ¼ tsp. salt and cook, stirring frequently, until both are nicely browned and shrunken, about 5 minutes. Add the sage and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Take the pan off the heat and add the vinegar, mustard, and the remaining 1 Tbs. oil. Stir to combine.

Return the pan to medium heat, add the green beans and toss to combine and heat through, 2 to 3 minutes. Season to taste with salt. Transfer to a warm serving platter and garnish with the pancetta.

Make ahead: The beans can be boiled and refrigerated up to 6 hours ahead. The remaining ingredients can also be prepped up to 6 hours ahead and held in the refrigerator. An hour before finishing, remove the beans from the refrigerator to come to room temperature.



THE TRADITION
mashed turnips

roasted turnips with maple and cardamom

For those who can't imagine turkey without a side of mashed turnips, here's a new take on the vegetable. An intriguing sauce laced with coriander and cardamom gives the dish surprising complexity.

Serves 8

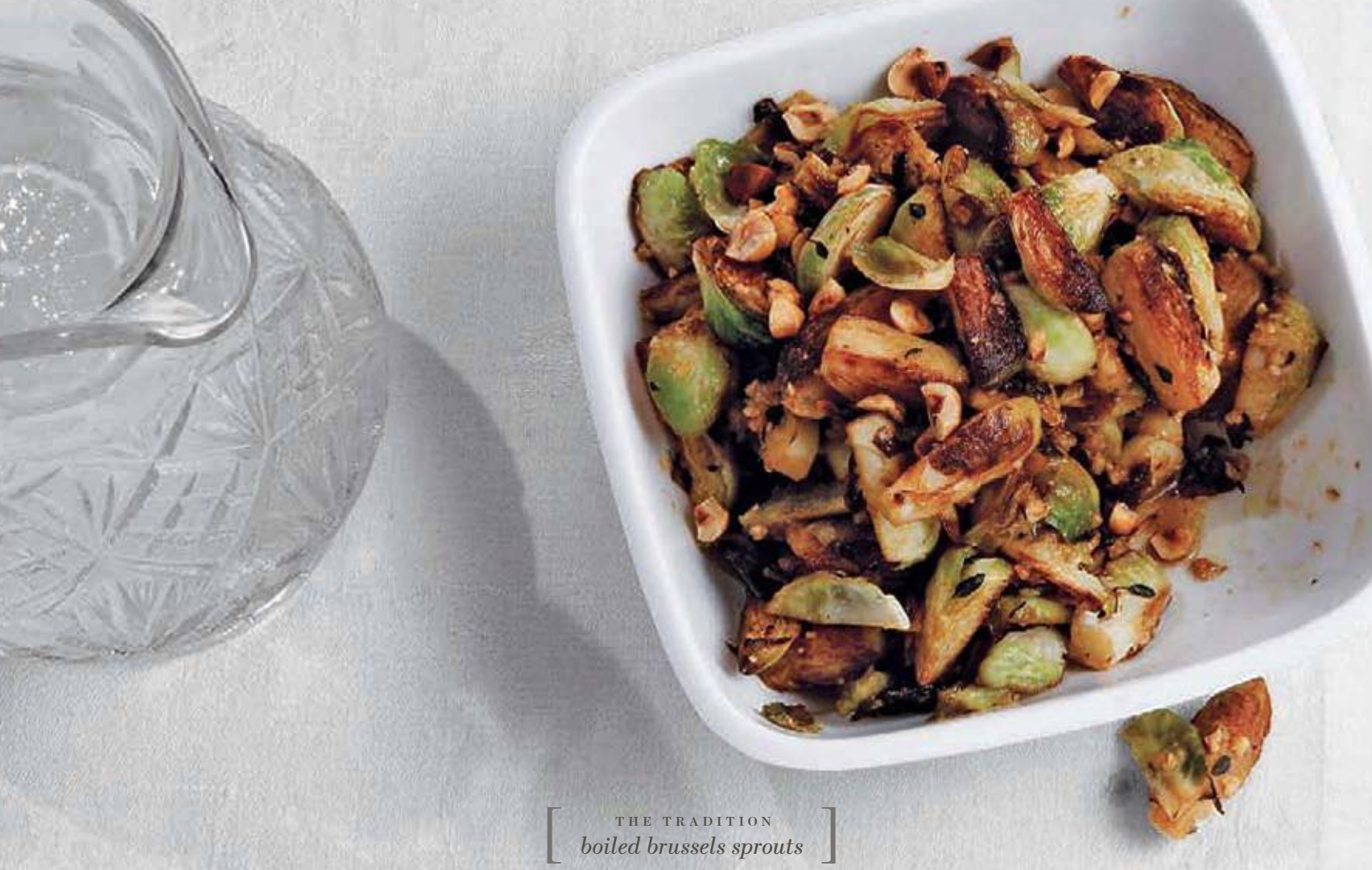
- **3½ lb. purple-top turnips, peeled and cut into ¾-inch dice (10 cups)**
- **3 Tbs. vegetable oil**
- **Kosher salt**
- **1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter**
- **3 Tbs. pure maple syrup**
- **¼ tsp. pure vanilla extract**
- **Generous pinch crushed red pepper flakes**
- **¼ tsp. ground coriander**
- **⅛ tsp. ground cardamom**
- **1 tsp. fresh lemon juice**
- **1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh cilantro (or a mix of parsley and mint)**

Position racks in the top and bottom thirds of the oven and heat the oven to 475°F. Line two large, heavy-duty rimmed baking sheets with foil. In a mixing bowl, combine the turnips, oil, and 1½ tsp. salt. Toss to coat well. Divide the turnips between the two pans and spread evenly in one layer. Roast for 20 minutes. With a large spatula, flip the turnips. Swap the pans' positions and roast until tender and nicely browned on a few sides, 15 to 20 minutes. (The turnips on the lower rack may be done sooner than those on the upper rack.)

Meanwhile, melt the butter in a small saucepan over low heat. Whisk in the maple syrup, vanilla, and red pepper flakes, and then the coriander and cardamom, until the sauce is heated, 30 seconds. Remove the pan from the heat.

Transfer the turnips to a large mixing bowl. Gently reheat the sauce, if necessary, and stir in the lemon juice. With a heatproof spatula, toss the sauce with the turnips. Add half of the cilantro and salt to taste and toss again. Transfer to a warm serving dish and garnish with the remaining cilantro.

Make ahead: This dish can be made a day ahead. To reheat, put the dressed turnips (without the cilantro) in a large nonstick skillet and cover with a lid. Heat gently over medium-low heat until warmed through, stirring occasionally, about 15 minutes. Add the cilantro and season to taste with salt just before serving.



THE TRADITION
boiled brussels sprouts

brussels sprouts with toasted hazelnut butter

The lemon zest in the butter adds loads of bright flavor to the nutty sprouts. Suffice it to say, this delicious dish trumps the old one.

Serves 6 to 8

FOR THE BUTTER

- **⅓ cup hazelnuts (about 1 oz.)**
- **2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened**
- **2 tsp. finely grated lemon zest**
- **1½ tsp. lightly chopped fresh thyme**
- **½ tsp. honey**
- **Kosher salt**

FOR THE BRUSSELS SPROUTS

- **¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **1¾ lb. Brussels sprouts, trimmed and quartered or cut into 6 wedges if very large (about 6 cups)**
- **Kosher salt**
- **½ cup lower-salt chicken broth**

MAKE THE BUTTER

Heat the oven to 400°F. Put the hazelnuts on a small rimmed baking sheet. Roast in the oven until they are a deep golden-brown (the skins will be visibly splitting), 5 to 6 minutes. Wrap the nuts in a clean kitchen towel, cool for a couple of minutes, and then take the skins off by rubbing the nuts together in the kitchen towel while still warm. Don't worry about getting all of the skins off.

Let the nuts cool for about 10 minutes. Finely chop ¼ cup of the nuts in a small food processor. The nuts should be very finely ground, but not so much that they turn into nut butter. Coarsely chop the remaining nuts and set aside for a garnish.

Put the finely chopped nuts, butter, lemon zest, thyme, honey, and ¼ tsp. salt in a small bowl and mix with a spatula until well combined. Set aside or refrigerate if not using right away.

COOK THE BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Heat the oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the Brussels sprouts and 1½ tsp. salt and stir well. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally and then more frequently as the sprouts begin to brown, until all of the sprouts are golden-brown on most sides and have lost their raw color (they will still feel firm), 15 to 18 minutes.

Add the broth and immediately cover the pan. Cook until the broth has reduced to a few tablespoons, about 2 minutes. Uncover, raise the heat to high, and boil off most of the remaining liquid, 1 to 2 minutes. Take the pan off the heat and add the hazelnut butter in spoonfuls; toss well. Season to taste with salt.

Transfer the sprouts to a warm serving dish and garnish with the reserved hazelnuts.

Make ahead: You can trim and quarter the Brussels sprouts several hours before cooking. The butter can be made and refrigerated (tightly wrapped) 2 days ahead. Store the extra nuts for garnish at room temperature.

Food styling by Allison Ehri Kreitler

Photographs by Scott Phillips



THE TRADITION
glazed carrots

pomegranate-balsamic-glazed carrots

Glazed carrots never had it so good. Bright, fresh flavors and a little cayenne play well with the rich fare on the rest of the Thanksgiving plate.

Serves 8

- **¼ cup pure pomegranate juice**
- **1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar**
- **2 tsp. honey**
- **1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter**
- **2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **2 lb. carrots, trimmed, peeled, and cut into sticks about 2 inches long and ⅜ inch wide (see Test Kitchen, p. 83, for more information)**
- **Kosher salt**
- **⅓ cup lower-salt chicken broth**
- **⅛ tsp. cayenne**
- **2 Tbs. lightly packed thinly sliced fresh mint**

Combine the juice, vinegar, and honey in a liquid measuring cup and whisk. Cut 1 Tbs. of the butter into 4 pieces and refrigerate. **In a 12-inch skillet,** heat the remaining 1 Tbs. butter with the olive oil over medium-high heat. When the butter has melted, add the carrots and 1½ tsp. salt and toss well to coat. Cook without stirring until the bottom layer of carrots is lightly browned in spots, 4 to 5 minutes. Using tongs, stir and flip the carrots and then leave undisturbed for 1 to 2 minutes to brown. Continue cooking, occasionally stirring and flipping, until most of the carrots are a bit browned in places and are starting to feel tender, an additional 3 to 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium if the bottom of the pan begins to brown too much.

Carefully add the chicken broth, cover quickly, and cook until all but about 1 Tbs. of the broth has evaporated, about 2 minutes. Uncover, reduce the heat to medium low, and add the pomegranate mixture (re-whisk, if necessary) and the cayenne. Cook, stirring gently, until the mixture reduces and becomes slightly glazy, about 1 minute. Take the pan off the heat, add the chilled butter, and gently toss with a heatproof spatula until the butter has melted, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Season to taste with salt and stir in about two-thirds of the mint. Serve in a warm shallow bowl or on a platter, garnished with the remaining mint.

Make ahead: Cut the carrots and prepare the rest of your ingredients up to 6 hours ahead. Cook the dish just before serving.







THE TRADITION

sweet potato casserole with marshmallow topping

bourbon sweet potato and apple casserole with a pecan crust

This dish is nothing like the sweet potato casserole of old. Sautéed apples, a crunchy pecan crust, and spicy mashed sweet potatoes make for a sophisticated update.

Serves 8

- **3 to 3¼ lb. sweet potatoes (about 3 large)**
- **2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter; more for the pan**
- **4 oz. toasted and very finely chopped pecans (1 cup)**
- **1⅓ cups fresh breadcrumbs**
- **2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh parsley**
- **Kosher salt**
- **1 cup heavy cream**
- **8 ¼-inch-thick slices fresh ginger, unpeeled and crushed**
- **2 whole star anise**
- **1 2- to 3-inch cinnamon stick**
- **2 Tbs. plus 2 tsp. bourbon**
- **1½ tsp. pure vanilla extract**
- **1¾ lb. Granny Smith apples (about 3 large), peeled, quartered, cored, and thinly sliced**

Bake the sweet potatoes: Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. Prick the sweet potatoes all over with a fork and bake them on the sheet until completely tender when pierced with a fork, 55 to 60 minutes. Let rest until cool enough to handle. Meanwhile, if not working ahead, reduce the oven temperature to 375°F.

Discard the skins and put the flesh in a medium mixing bowl. With a potato masher, work the sweet potatoes until they're well mashed (they don't have to be perfectly smooth).

Make the crumb topping: Melt 2 Tbs. of the butter and combine with the pecans, breadcrumbs, parsley, and two big pinches of salt in a small bowl.

Infuse the cream: Combine the heavy cream, ginger, star anise, and cinnamon stick in a small saucepan. Bring to a full boil (watch carefully so that it doesn't boil over) and remove from the heat immediately. Let steep for 15 to 20 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve into a liquid measuring cup, pressing down on the solids with a spatula to extract all of the liquid. Stir in 2 Tbs. of the bourbon, the vanilla extract, and ¼ tsp. salt.

Cook the apples: In a 12-inch nonstick skillet, melt the remaining 2 Tbs. butter over medium-high heat. Add the apples, season with ¼ tsp. salt, and toss well. Raise the heat to high and cook, stirring frequently, until soft and lightly browned, 8 to 9 minutes. Lower the heat if the apples are getting too dark, but not so much that they soften without browning.

Turn off the heat, carefully add the remaining 2 tsp. bourbon and stir until it evaporates, a few seconds. Pour in ⅓ cup of the infused cream and stir until the apples have absorbed most of it, a few more seconds. Set the pan aside and let the apples cool for about 15 minutes, turning them occasionally to release steam.

Assemble the casserole: Butter a shallow 3-quart baking dish (9x13-inch works well). Add the remaining cream to the mashed sweet potatoes and mix thoroughly. Season to taste with salt. Arrange the apples across the bottom of the baking dish. Spread the sweet potato mixture over the apples in an even layer. Top with the pecan-crumb mixture.

Bake the casserole at 375°F until the crumb topping is dark brown (it will be browner around the edges) and the casserole is heated through, about 25 minutes.

Make ahead: You can bake and mash the sweet potatoes and make the crumb topping a day ahead (cover both and refrigerate). Bring the potatoes and crumb topping to room temperature before assembling the dish. You can also assemble and refrigerate for up to 8 hours before baking. Return to room temperature before baking.

For sources, see Where to Buy It



THE TRADITION
creamed onions

creamy baked leeks with garlic, thyme, and parmigiano

This simple recipe doesn't require the cook's attention at the last minute—but it will get the attention of your onion-loving guests. If possible, choose leeks that are all about the same size.

Serves 8

- **1 tsp. unsalted butter**
- **Kosher salt**
- **8 medium-large leeks (ideally with several inches of white)**
- **2 tsp. lightly chopped fresh thyme**
- **1 cup heavy cream**
- **2 large cloves garlic, smashed and peeled**
- **⅓ cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano**

Heat the oven to 350°F. Rub the bottom of a shallow 10x15-inch (or similar) rectangular baking dish with the butter. Sprinkle ¼ tsp. salt over the bottom of the pan.

Cut the dark-green portion and all but about 1 inch of the light green off the top of the leeks. Peel away any tough or damaged outer leaves. Trim the ends by cutting the roots but leaving a bit of the base intact to hold the leek together. Cut each leek in half lengthwise. Gently wash each half under running water, fanning open the layers to rinse as thoroughly as possible. Pat the leeks dry and then arrange them cut side down in the baking dish. They should all fit snugly, but if they are crowded, turn a few on their sides. Sprinkle the thyme and ¼ tsp. salt over the leeks.

Heat the cream and garlic in a small saucepan over high heat. As soon as the cream comes to a rolling boil (watch carefully and don't let it boil over), remove the pan from the heat and let sit for 5 minutes. Pour the cream and garlic evenly over the leeks.

Cover the leeks with a piece of parchment cut to fit inside the pan.

Bake the leeks until the thickest ends are tender all the way through when pierced with a paring knife and the cream is almost entirely reduced, about 35 minutes. Sprinkle the leeks with the Parmigiano and salt to taste. Bake just until the cheese melts, an additional 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer the leeks to a warm serving platter.

Make ahead: You can wash and trim the leeks and arrange them in the buttered baking dish 6 hours ahead.

Susie Middleton is Fine Cooking*'s editor at large. Her first cookbook,* Fast, Fresh, & Green: 125 Delicious Recipes for Veggie Lovers, *is due out in spring 2010.*



Pie Dreams

A good pie is all about the crust. Learn the secrets to flaky, buttery perfection, then choose from four delicious fillings that are just right for the season. BY NICOLE REES





Fresh Pear Pie with Dried Cherries and Brown Sugar Streusel, page 62

What makes a great piecrust?

In a word: butter—even better, really good butter. Sure, lard or shortening produces a tender, flaky crust, but they can't compete with butter's flavor. Creamy, rich European-style butter is especially good. It has a higher fat content (and less water) than most American butters, so it's tastier and more supple to work with.

The good news is that a butter crust can be just as flaky as one made with lard if you make it the old-fashioned way—by hand, rubbing cold chunks of butter between your fingertips and into the flour. No pastry blender, no mixer, no food processor. This technique allows you to monitor the size of the butter pieces in



all-butter piecrust

This pie dough can be made ahead and refrigerated overnight or frozen (before or after rolling) for up to 3 months. Simply transfer the dough to the refrigerator the night before you plan to make pie, and it'll be ready to go.

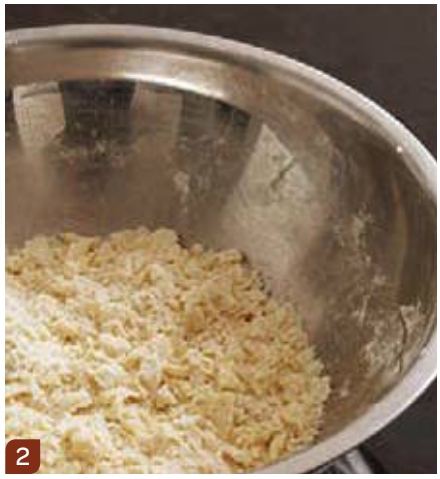
Yields one 9-inch piecrust

- **6 oz. (1⅓ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour**
- **1 tsp. granulated sugar**
- **⅜ tsp. table salt**
- **4 oz. (8 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, preferably European style, cut into ¾-inch pieces**
- **3 to 4 Tbs. ice water**

MAKE THE DOUGH









To make the dough: Put the flour, sugar, and salt in a medium bowl and stir with a rubber spatula or a fork to combine. Add the butter to the bowl. Rub the cold chunks of butter between your fingertips, smearing the butter into the flour 1 to create small (roughly ¼-inch) flakes of fat 2.

Drizzle 3 Tbs. ice water over the flour mixture. Stir with the spatula or fork, adding 1 Tbs. more water if necessary, until the mixture forms a shaggy dough that's moist enough to hold together when pressed between your fingers 3.

With well-floured hands, gently gather and press the dough together, and then form it into a disk with smooth edges 4. Wrap the dough in plastic and chill for at least 1 hour, but preferably 2 to 4 hours, before rolling.

Photographs by Scott Phillips

the flour and creates flakes, rather than lumps, that remain in the dough when you roll it. As the crust bakes, the butter melts, creating steam pockets that leave behind a flaky texture. It's a classic method and one well worth bringing back.

Below, we take you through this easy technique step by step and then show you how to roll out the dough, transfer it to a pie plate, and blind bake it. From there, it's a simple matter of choosing the filling. Or maybe not so simple, since the choices range from coffee-toffee pecan, to spiced pumpkin, to pear and dried cherry, and finally cranberry-apple. Delicious indecision.

ROLL THE DOUGH



To roll the dough: Let the chilled dough sit at room temperature to soften slightly—it should be cold and firm but not rock hard. Depending on how long the dough was chilled, this could take 5 to 20 minutes. When ready to roll, lightly flour the countertop or other surface (a pastry cloth, silicone rolling mat, or parchment on a counter also works great) and position the rolling pin in the center of the dough disk. Roll away from you toward 12 o'clock, easing the pressure as you near the edge to keep the edge from becoming too thin. Return to the center and roll toward 6 o'clock. Repeat toward 3 and then 9 o'clock, always easing the pressure at the edges and picking up the pin rather than rolling it back to the center 5.

Continue to "roll around the clock," aiming for different "times" on each pass until the dough is 13 to 14 inches in diameter and about ⅛ inch thick. Try to use as few passes of the rolling pin as possible. After every few passes, check that the dough isn't sticking by lifting it with a bench knife (dough scraper). Reflour only as needed—excess flour makes a drier, tougher crust. Each time you lift the dough, give it a quarter turn to help even out the thickness.

LINE THE PIE PLATE





To line the pie plate: Gently transfer the dough to a 9-inch pie plate, preferably metal, by folding it in half and unfolding it into the plate. Do not stretch the dough as you line the pan, or it will spring back when baked. Gently lift the outer edges of the dough to give you enough slack to line the sides of the pan without stretching the dough 6.

Trim the overhanging dough to 1 inch from the edge of the pan. Roll the dough under itself into a cylinder that rests on the edge of the pan 7.



To crimp the edge, have one hand on the inside of the edge, and one hand on the outside, and use the index finger of the inside hand to push the dough between the thumb and index finger of the outside hand to form a U or V shape 8. Repeat around the edge of the pie plate, creating a crimped edge whose individual flutes are about an inch apart. (Turn to Test Kitchen, p. 83, for more ideas on decorative edges.) As you are going along, if you notice that the edge is not perfectly symmetrical and that the amount of dough you'll have to crimp seems sparse in places, take a bit of trimmed scrap, wet it with a drop or two of water, and attach it to the sparse area by pressing it firmly into place.

Prick the sides and bottom of the crust all over with a fork. Refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour or overnight. This will relax the dough and help prevent the edges from caving in.

To see a video on crimping piecrust, visit FineCooking.com/extras.

Food styling by Allison Ehri Kreitler, except piecrust opposite, Jennifer Armentrout

BLIND BAKE THE CRUST


9


10

To blind bake the crust: Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F. Line the chilled piecrust with foil and fill it with dried beans or pie weights 9. Bake for 15 minutes; remove the foil and the beans or weights. Reduce the oven temperature to 375°F.

Bake until the bottom looks dry but is not quite done and the edges are light golden, 5 to 7 minutes more 10. Let cool on a rack while you prepare one of the fillings on pp. 62–63.

Blind-Baking Basics

Blind baking means baking an empty piecrust before adding a filling. Here's what you need to know:

WHY BLIND BAKE?

Blind baking gives the crust a head start, allowing it to firm up before the filling is added. This prevents the crust from getting soggy. Dried beans or pie weights help it keep its shape. Without them, the crust will rise and puff on the bottom or slide down the sides under the weight of the crimped edge.

HOW LONG?

In recipes where the filling doesn't need further cooking or cooks for a short period of time, such as cream pies or fruit tarts, the crust is usually blind baked until cooked through and golden-brown. But in recipes where the pie cooks for a while after adding the filling (like the ones here), it's best to blind bake the crust just part way so it won't overcook as it continues to bake with the filling.

REMEMBER TO CHILL

Don't be tempted to skip chilling a crust before blind baking it. Piecrusts baked right after shaping are warm enough for the butter to melt quickly in the oven, causing the edge to sink or even slump over the edge of the pie pan.



The Pie Baker's Tip Sheet

1. Cold butter For flaky piecrust, it's important to start with very cold butter, so that it doesn't melt while you work it into the flour. When this happens, butter becomes too thoroughly mixed with the flour, resulting in a mealy, crumbly crust rather than a flaky one. Freeze butter briefly if you have warm hands, live in a warm climate, or are making a very large batch of pie dough. It's also a good idea to chill the bowl and even the flour when making pie in warm weather.

2. Just enough water For a tender piecrust, don't add too much water. Water contributes to the development of gluten proteins. If you add more than necessary, the resulting crust may still be flaky, but it will be tough rather than tender. For these reasons, trust your fingertips over your eyes: The dough should hold together when pressed between your fingers, although it will still look pretty shaggy.

3. Easy rolling Take the time before chilling the dough to form an even, circular disk with clean, smooth edges. This will make rolling out the dough much easier because the edges are less likely to crack.

4. Crisp crust Bake filled pies on a preheated, rimmed baking sheet and use a lightweight metal pie dish. Both will help set the crust quickly, preventing it from getting soggy. Baking on a sheet is also handy for catching bubbling juices.



From Crust to Pie

Turn the page for four irresistible filling options: pecan, pumpkin, apple, and pear.

Clockwise, from top: Coffee-Toffee Pecan Pie, Ginger-Spice Cranberry-Apple Streusel Pie, Jamaican-Spiced Pumpkin Pie



COVER RECIPE

fresh pear pie with dried cherries and brown sugar streusel

A hint of spice lets the delicate flavor of the pears shine through, while the dried cherries are a welcome alternative to traditional raisins.

Serves 8

FOR THE STREUSEL

- **4½ oz. (1 cup) unbleached all-purpose flour**
- **½ cup old-fashioned rolled oats**
- **½ cup packed light brown sugar**
- **¼ tsp. table salt**
- **4 oz. (8 Tbs.) unsalted butter, melted**

FOR THE FILLING

- **3 lb. ripe Anjou or Bartlett pears (5 or 6 medium), peeled and cored, cut lengthwise into 8 wedges and then crosswise into ½-inch slices (about 7 cups)**
- **1½ Tbs. fresh lemon juice**
- **⅔ cup granulated sugar**
- **1⅛ oz. (¼ cup) unbleached all-purpose flour**
- **¼ tsp. table salt**
- **¼ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **⅛ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg**
- **¾ cup dried tart cherries, coarsely chopped**
- **1 blind-baked All-Butter Piecrust (recipe on p. 58)**

Position a rack in the center of the oven, set a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet on the rack, and heat the oven to 350°F.

MAKE THE STREUSEL

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, oats, sugar, and salt. Using your fingers, blend the butter into the flour mixture. The mixture will be moist. Set aside.

MAKE THE FILLING

In a large bowl, toss the pears with the lemon juice. In a small bowl, whisk the sugar, flour, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Add the sugar mixture to the pears and toss well to combine. Stir in the cherries. **Mound the filling** into the piecrust. Sprinkle the streusel topping over the pear mixture, pressing the streusel between your fingers into small lumps as you sprinkle. **Put the pie** on the heated baking sheet and bake until the pastry is golden-brown and the filling is bubbly and thickened at the edges, 55 to 65 minutes. Rotate the pie halfway through baking, and if the pastry or streusel browns before the filling has thickened, loosely cover the top or edges of the pie as needed with a pie shield or a sheet of aluminum foil. **Transfer to a rack** and cool completely before serving. The pie can be stored at room temperature for up to 2 days.

jamaican-spiced pumpkin pie

Coconut milk and spiced rum add an unusual and delicious twist to this pumpkin pie.

Serves 8

- **1 15-oz. can pure pumpkin purée**
- **1¼ cups unsweetened coconut milk (full fat only, stirred or shaken well before using)**
- **¾ cup packed light brown sugar**
- **1 tsp. ground ginger**
- **¾ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **½ tsp. table salt**
- **⅛ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg**
- **4 large eggs, at room temperature**
- **2 Tbs. spiced rum, such as Captain Morgan**
- **1 blind-baked All-Butter Piecrust (recipe on p. 58)**

Position a rack in the center of the oven, set a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet on the rack, and heat the oven to 425°F.

In a large bowl, whisk the pumpkin, coconut milk, sugar, ginger, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg until smooth. Whisk in the eggs and then the rum, until the mixture is smooth. Pour the filling into the piecrust. **Put the pie** on the heated baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes and then reduce the oven temperature to 350°F. Bake until the center of the pie no longer wobbles when the pan is nudged (a slight jiggle is fine), an additional 45 to 55 minutes.

Transfer to a rack and cool completely before serving. The pie can be stored at room temperature for up to 2 days.





ginger-spice cranberry-apple streusel pie

Tart apples and cranberries are tempered with a nutty, sweet streusel and a hint of cardamom.

Serves 8

FOR THE STREUSEL

- **4½ oz. (1 cup) unbleached all-purpose flour**
- **¾ cup packed light brown sugar**
- **½ cup chopped lightly toasted walnuts**
- **¼ tsp. table salt**
- **3 oz. (6 Tbs.) unsalted butter, melted**

FOR THE FILLING

- **4 tart baking apples, such as Granny Smith or Pink Lady (1½ to 2 lb.)**
- **6 oz. fresh or thawed frozen cranberries (1¾ cups)**
- **¾ cup plus 6 Tbs. granulated sugar**
- **1 oz. (3½ Tbs.) all-purpose flour**
- **1 Tbs. finely chopped crystallized ginger**
- **¼ tsp. ground cardamom**
- **¼ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **1 blind-baked All-Butter Piecrust (recipe on p. 58)**

Position a rack in the center of the oven, set a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet on the rack, and heat the oven to 350°F.

MAKE THE STREUSEL

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, sugar, walnuts, and salt. Using your fingers, blend the butter into the flour mixture. Set aside.

MAKE THE FILLING

Peel, quarter, and core each apple. Cut each quarter lengthwise into ¼-inch-thick slices and then cut each slice crosswise at ¼-inch intervals to make tiny rectangles. In a food processor, pulse the cranberries with ¾ cup of the sugar until coarsely chopped. In a large bowl, combine the remaining 6 Tbs. sugar with the flour, ginger, cardamom, and cinnamon, breaking up ginger clumps with your fingers. Toss in the cranberry mixture and apples.

Mound the filling into the piecrust. Sprinkle the streusel topping over the apple mixture, pressing the streusel between your fingers into small lumps as you sprinkle.

Put the pie on the heated baking sheet and bake until the streusel is deeply browned and the filling is bubbling vigorously at the edges of the pie, 65 to 75 minutes. Check every 20 minutes, and if the pastry edge or the streusel browns before the filling is done, loosely cover the top or edges of the pie as needed with aluminum foil.

Transfer to a rack and cool completely before serving. The pie can be stored at room temperature for up to 2 days.



coffee-toffee pecan pie

With notes of butterscotch, espresso, and bourbon, this is a pecan pie like no other.

Serves 8

- **3 oz. (6 Tbs.) unsalted butter**
- **¾ cup packed dark brown sugar**
- **¾ cup light or dark corn syrup**
- **½ cup Lyle's Golden Syrup (see Test Kitchen, p. 83, for more information)**
- **3 large eggs, at room temperature**
- **2 Tbs. bourbon**
- **1 Tbs. instant espresso powder**
- **1 tsp. pure vanilla extract**
- **¾ tsp. table salt**
- **⅓ cup very finely chopped toasted pecans**
- **2 cups toasted pecan halves**
- **1 blind-baked All-Butter Piecrust (recipe on p. 58)**
- **½ cup crushed chocolate toffee candy pieces, such as Heath or Skor**

Position a rack in the center of the oven, set a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet on the rack, and heat the oven to 375°F.

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter and cook, swirling the pan occasionally, until the butter is brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Immediately whisk in the brown sugar, corn syrup, and Lyle's Golden Syrup until smooth. Remove the pan from the heat and let cool slightly. One at a time, whisk in the eggs. Whisk in the bourbon, espresso powder, vanilla, and salt. Stir in the chopped pecans.

Sprinkle half of the pecan halves in the piecrust, followed by the toffee candy pieces, and then the remaining pecan halves. Pour the syrup mixture over all.

Put the pie on the heated baking sheet and reduce the oven temperature to 350°F. Bake until set, 45 to 55 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through baking. When the pan is nudged, the center of the pie will no longer wobble, but the whole pie will jiggle just slightly, and the filling will bubble at the edges.

Transfer to a rack and cool completely before serving. The pie can be stored at room temperature for up to 2 days.

Nicole Rees is a food scientist and professional baker who lives in Portland, Oregon. ◘

For sources, see Where to Buy It

French Onion Soup

The bistro classic squares off against a modern upstart. Which version will you choose? BY ANNE WILLAN AND CHRIS SANTOS





Big Cheese

Aged Gruyère is key to getting the bubbling crust of traditional French onion soup. Why? It's rich, smooth, and melts easily.



Rustic Roots

Before *soupe à l'oignon* made it to the bistros of Lyon and Paris, its likely origins were in a simple peasant meal of onions, broth, and stale bread.



Bold Yellow

Plenty of flavorful yellow onions cooked until deep brown are the secret to this classic.

The Morning After

In Paris, onion soup is eaten in the wee hours of the morning after a night on the town. Its presence on breakfast menus confirms its status as a cure for the common hangover.

THE CLASSIC

The grande dame of French cuisine, Anne Willan, shares her recipe for the ultimate classic. It's made with homemade beef broth and caramelized onions, and topped with oozing Gruyère cheese.

Photographs by Scott Phillips



Small Fry
The soup dumplings are quickly deep-fried before the dish is topped with cheese and finished in the oven, in a nod to tradition.

On a Stick
In a sly reference to the classic, the dumplings are skewered with croutons, which stand in for the expected slice of bread.

It's a Wrap
Inspired by traditional Chinese soup dumplings, this update features onion soup wrapped inside a purse-like dumpling.

Freeze Frame
To make it easier to contain the soup inside the dumplings, the soup is frozen and then cut into small pieces.

THE UPDATE

Chris Santos's modern version comes straight from his menu at The Stanton Social on New York's Lower East Side. It's a whimsical idea that resembles Chinese soup dumplings more than it does any onion soup we've ever had.

THE CLASSIC

french onion soup

Serves 6 to 8

- **2 oz. (¼ cup) unsalted butter, more for the baking sheet**
- **4 medium-large yellow onions (about 2 lb.), thinly sliced (8 cups)**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **1 tsp. granulated sugar**
- **1 small baguette (½ lb.), cut into ½-inch slices**
- **2 quarts Roasted Beef Broth (recipe at right) or lower-salt canned beef or chicken broth**
- **1 bay leaf**
- **2 cups grated Gruyère**

Melt the butter in a 4-quart pot over medium heat. Stir in the onions and season with 1 tsp. salt and a few grinds of pepper. Reduce the heat to low. Press a piece of foil onto the onions to cover them completely, cover the pot with a lid, and cook, stirring occasionally (you will have to lift the foil), until the onions are very soft but not falling apart, 40 to 50 minutes. Remove the lid and foil, raise the heat to medium high, and stir in the sugar. Cook, stirring often, until very deeply browned, 10 to 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, to make the croûtes (baguette toasts), position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Butter a rimmed baking sheet and arrange the baguette slices on the sheet in a single layer. Bake until the bread is crisp and lightly browned, turning once, 15 to 20 minutes. Set aside.

Add the broth and bay leaf to the caramelized onions and bring the soup to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer for 10 minutes to blend the flavors. Discard the bay leaf and season to taste with salt and pepper.

To serve, position a rack 6 inches from the broiler and heat the broiler to high. Put 6 to 8 broilerproof soup bowls or crocks on a baking sheet. Put 2 or 3 croûtes in each bowl and ladle the hot soup on top. Sprinkle with the cheese and broil until the top is browned and bubbly, 2 to 5 minutes. Serve immediately.

Make ahead: The soup and croûtes can be made up to 2 days ahead. Store the soup in the refrigerator and the croûtes in an airtight container at room temperature.

ROASTED BEEF BROTH

Yields about 2½ quarts

- **5 lb. meaty beef or veal bones, such as shanks, knuckles, and ribs**
- **2 medium carrots, cut into big chunks**
- **2 medium yellow onions, quartered**
- **1 bouquet garni (1 sprig fresh thyme, 1 bay leaf, and 4 parsley stems, tied with twine)**
- **1 Tbs. black peppercorns**
- **1 Tbs. tomato paste**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F.

Put the bones on a large rimmed baking sheet and roast until beginning to brown, about 20 minutes. Add the carrots and onions and continue roasting until the bones and vegetables are very brown, 30 to 45 minutes more.

With a slotted spoon or tongs, transfer the roasted bones and vegetables to a stockpot, leaving any rendered fat in the pan. Add the bouquet garni, peppercorns, tomato paste, and 5 to 7 quarts cold water (enough to cover the bones and vegetables by a couple of inches) to the pot. Bring to a boil slowly over medium heat, reduce the heat to medium low or low, and simmer, uncovered, skimming the surface occasionally with a slotted spoon until the broth is flavorful and reduced enough to just barely cover the bones and vegetables, 4 to 5 hours.

Strain the broth into a large bowl, cover, and chill. Skim off any fat before using. The broth can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 2 months.



ANNE SAYS,

"My classic is all about onions cooked until perfectly caramelized and meltingly tender; dark, rich beef broth; and melted cheese on top. Need I say more?"

THE UPDATE

french onion soup dumplings

Yields 40 dumplings; serves 8 to 10 as an appetizer

FOR THE "SOUP"

- **4 oz. (½ cup) unsalted butter**
- **1 cup thinly sliced yellow or red onion (or a combination)**
- **½ cup thinly sliced shallot (2 medium)**
- **1 cup dry red wine**
- **1 cup lower-salt beef broth**
- **1 cup lower-salt chicken broth**
- **2 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme**
- **1 Tbs. aged balsamic vinegar**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

FOR THE CROUTONS

- **½ lb. dense, chewy bread, crust removed, cut into ¾-inch cubes (about 2 cups)**
- **2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **½ tsp. minced garlic (1 medium clove)**
- **½ tsp. chopped fresh thyme**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

FOR THE DUMPLINGS

- **40 square wonton wrappers**
- **1 large egg, lightly beaten**
- **3 cups vegetable oil**
- **1¾ cups grated Gruyère**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

MAKE THE "SOUP"

Melt the butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium-low heat. Add the onions and shallots and cook, stirring frequently, until they're a deep caramel color, 25 to 35 minutes.

Raise the heat to medium, add the wine, and cook until it has completely evaporated, 5 to 9 minutes. Add the beef and chicken broths and cook until the liquid is reduced by about half, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the thyme and vinegar, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook 1 minute more. Remove from the heat and let cool. Line a 4½x8½-inch loaf pan with foil and pour the "soup" mixture into the pan. Freeze until solid, at least 4 hours but preferably overnight.

MAKE THE CROUTONS

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F. In a large bowl, toss the bread with the olive oil, garlic, thyme, ¼ tsp. salt, and ⅛ tsp. pepper. Spread the croutons on a small baking sheet and bake, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 15 minutes. Let cool and then skewer 40 of the best-looking croutons with toothpicks (save the leftovers for another use).

MAKE THE DUMPLINGS

Working with about 10 wonton wrappers at a time, arrange them on a flat surface and brush the edges with the egg. Unmold the "soup" mixture from the loaf pan. Using a chef's knife, cut the frozen soup lengthwise into 4 long, even strips, and then cut each strip crosswise into 10 even pieces, to make 40 pieces total, each about ¾ inch square. Put one square in the center of each wrapper and fold up the edges, pressing to create a purse-like dumpling. Repeat to make 40 dumplings. Put the dumplings on a small baking sheet or tray and freeze until ready to fry.

Heat the vegetable oil in a 4-quart saucepan over medium-high heat until the temperature on a candy thermometer reads 365°F or until the oil begins to ripple and bubbles immediately when the edge of one dumpling is dipped into it. Have ready a tray or plate lined with paper towels. Add as many dumplings as will fit in the pan without crowding and fry until golden brown, 2 to 4 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the dumplings to the paper towels. Continue frying the remaining dumplings.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F. Divide the dumplings among 8 to 10 small, shallow ovenproof gratin dishes and top with the Gruyère. Bake until the cheese is melted, 5 to 6 minutes. Stick a crouton skewer in each dumpling, sprinkle with a little salt and pepper, and serve.

Anne Willan is the founder of La Varenne cooking school. Chris Santos is executive chef and owner of The Stanton Social in New York City.

Which version is your favorite? Go to FineCooking.com/extras and let us know.

CHRIS SAYS,

"My food is meant for sharing. But how do you share French onion soup politely? In my version, you get everything that's great about the classic—crispy bread, gooey cheese, and luscious soup—in one delicious bite."



Food styling by Frank Melodia

For sources, see Where to Buy It



Good Catch

Five fish you can always feel good about buying—and delicious things to do with them. BY JAY WEINSTEIN



Clockwise from left: Pacific halibut, arctic char, black cod, mackerel, striped bass

Shopping at the fish counter can be confusing these days. Which fish should you buy? What kinds are safe to eat? We've all heard the warnings about dwindling fish populations and fish farming's environmental costs, not to mention the news about mercury in large fish and the health consequences it poses. What's a cook to do?

Research is good; downloadable buying charts are accurate and exhaustive. But without those tools at hand, it's wise to have a fallback plan. With that in mind, here are five great-tasting sustainable fish that you can always buy (and eat) with peace of mind. They're plentiful, wild, and sustainably caught, and all have relatively low levels of mercury.

Some of these fish may be familiar (halibut) and others may not (mackerel), but all are easy to prepare and at their best when simply cooked, allowing their fresh, distinctive flavors to shine. No more wondering what to buy or how to cook it—and that's no fish story.



pan-seared arctic char with olives and potatoes

Serves 4

- **4 small red potatoes (about ¾ lb.), sliced ¼ inch thick**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **4 skin-on arctic char fillets (about 5 oz. each), scaled**
- **3 Tbs. olive oil**
- **2 sprigs fresh rosemary, each about 3 inches long**
- **½ cup pitted Kalamata olives**
- **3 Tbs. roughly chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- **1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar**
- **4 lemon wedges**

In a medium saucepan over high heat, bring the potatoes to a boil in enough salted water to cover them by 1 inch. Reduce the heat to a brisk simmer and cook until tender but not falling apart, about 5 minutes. Drain. Set aside.

Pat the fish dry and season with ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. Heat 1½ Tbs. of the olive oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Arrange the fish skin side down in the pan so the fillets fit without touching. Cook undisturbed for 3 minutes. Flip the fillets and cook until the fish is cooked through, an additional 2 to 3 minutes. With a slotted spatula, transfer the fish to a serving platter or plates.

Add the remaining 1½ Tbs. oil to the pan and heat until shimmering. Add the potatoes and rosemary and cook, flipping occasionally, until the potatoes are tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the olives, parsley, balsamic, and a pinch of salt and pepper and stir gently to heat. Arrange the potato mixture around the fish. Serve garnished with the lemon wedges.

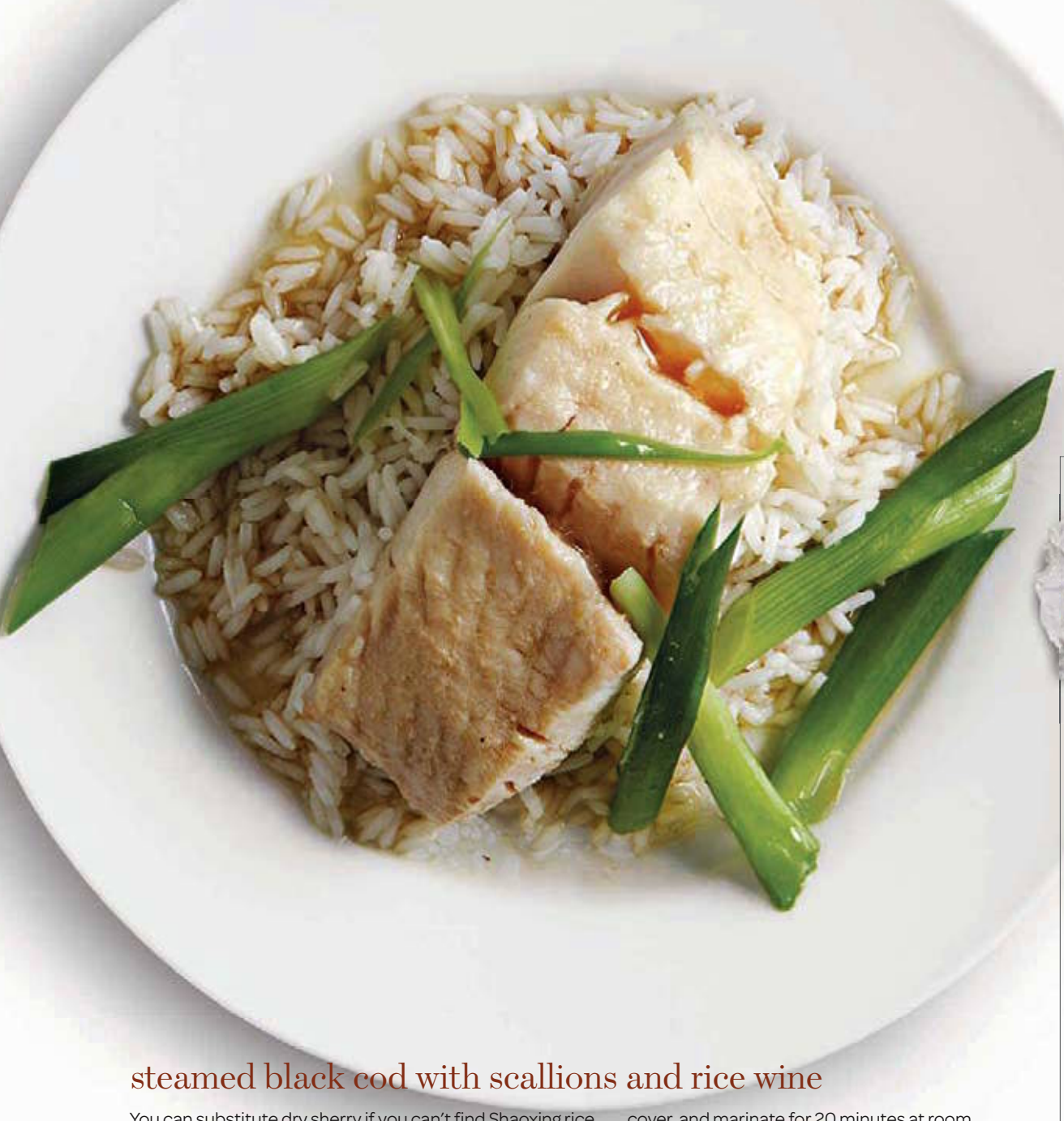
FISH FACTS



ARCTIC CHAR

Why this fish Caught in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest, char was never threatened because it is a fast-reproducing fish that was largely ignored during the heyday of salmon. Now that overfishing and unsustainable farming practices have turned salmon into an eco-culinary mess, char is getting its share of attention. (If you can't find it wild, farmed arctic char is a good alternative because it's raised sustainably.)

Why we love it A distant cousin of salmon and trout, char has a mild salmon-like flavor and a beautiful pink color—the result of its natural diet, which includes tiny crustaceans like pink shrimp. Arctic char takes well to virtually any cooking method, and it's hard to overcook, since its fatty texture allows a good deal of elbow room.



steamed black cod with scallions and rice wine

You can substitute dry sherry if you can't find Shaoxing rice wine in an Asian market or a wine store. For a mail-order source, see Where to Buy It, p. 93.

Serves 4

- **1 2-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled**
- **1 tsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce**
- **1 tsp. granulated sugar**
- **4 skinless black cod fillets (about 4 oz. each)**
- **12 scallions or spring onions, dark-green parts only, cut on the diagonal into 2-inch pieces**
- **2 Tbs. canola oil**
- **¼ cup Shaoxing (Chinese rice wine)**
- **1 cup long-grain white rice, preferably jasmine, cooked according to package directions**

With a rasp-style grater, grate the ginger into a fine sieve set over a large bowl. Use the back of a spoon to press down on the pulp to release the juice; discard the pulp. Stir in the soy sauce and sugar. Add the fish, turn to coat, cover, and marinate for 20 minutes at room temperature.

Set a steamer (either western style or Asian bamboo) over a pot with at least 1 inch of simmering water. On a dinner plate that can fit in the steamer, arrange the fish so the fillets fit without touching (discard the remaining marinade). Distribute the scallions around the fish and put the plate in the steamer. Cover and steam the fish until just cooked through, 4 to 5 minutes.

Heat the oil in a small pan over medium heat and add the Shaoxing. Allow it to sizzle for just a few seconds and remove from the heat.

Divide the rice among 4 dinner plates. Top the rice with the fish and scallions (transfer directly from the steamer without attempting to remove the plate). Spoon the Shaoxing sauce over all and serve.

FISH FACTS



BLACK COD

Why this fish Unlike the similarly textured Chilean sea bass, black cod is harvested from well-managed Alaskan fisheries, which impose strict catch limits to protect the species from depletion. So black cod populations are not threatened. It's different, though, for other types of cod, like Atlantic cod, whose worldwide populations have collapsed one by one, with only the northeastern United States population remaining, and Pacific cod, whose fisheries are sustainable but small.

Why we love it Called sablefish in Europe, black cod is one of the richest-tasting fish on the market. It is buttery and luxurious and nearly impossible to overcook. A cook's dream, black cod is incredibly versatile, lending itself to steaming and braising as well as roasting. It's delicious in light, delicate preparations (like the one here), but can also stand up to spicy, aggressive marinades.

Food styling by Frank Melodia

Photographs by Scott Phillips

FISH FACTS



STRIPED BASS

Why this fish With fisheries predominantly on the eastern seaboard, striped bass has begun to rebound from overfishing in the 1980s, thanks to sensible fishing practices. As a result, its population is increasing every year. (If you can't find it wild, farmed striped bass is a good alternative because it's raised sustainably.)

Why we love it Striped bass has a delicate, almost grassy flavor that's similar to snapper but cleaner and less oily. Its delicate texture makes it well suited for sautéing, roasting, or steaming; grilling can be tricky, as the flesh tends to fall apart easily. It requires a little attention at the stove because it can quickly cross the line from juicy to overcooked. The method at right is easy, since you can keep an eye on the fish throughout the cooking process. Striped bass plays well with other gentle flavors like leeks and mushrooms, or it can be a vehicle for assertive, spicy flavors, from Indian to North African (as in this recipe).

crisp striped bass with preserved lemon, chickpeas, and couscous

Preserved lemon brings a bright, salty citrus note to this dish. For information on where to buy preserved lemon and harissa, see p. 93.

Serves 4

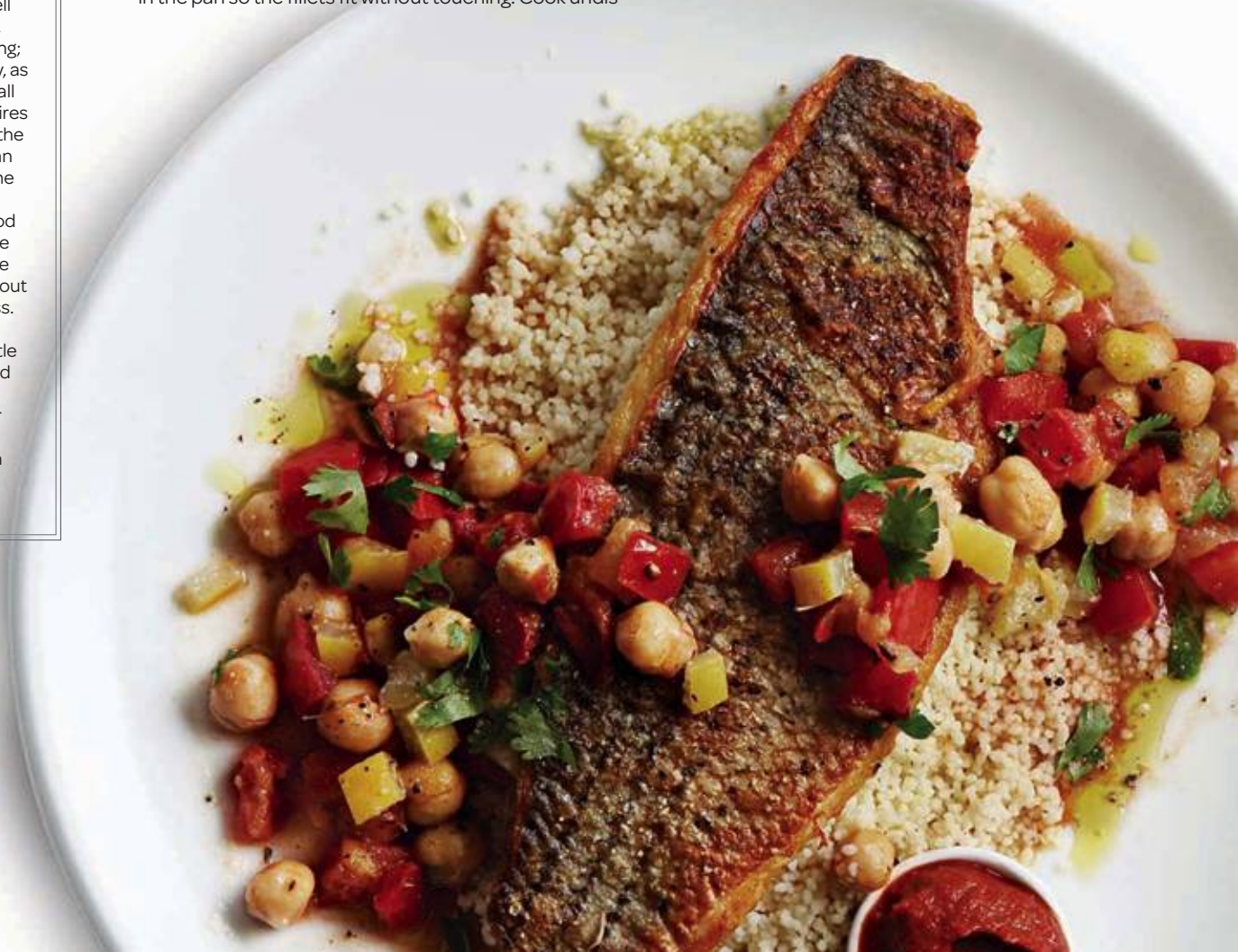
- **4 skin-on striped bass fillets (5 oz. each), scaled**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **¾ cup all-purpose unbleached flour**
- **3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more for drizzling**
- **¼ tsp. cumin seeds**
- **2 cups seeded, diced fresh tomatoes**
- **1 19-oz. can chickpeas, drained and rinsed (about 2 cups)**
- **2 Tbs. chopped Moroccan preserved lemon (or 1 tsp. grated lemon zest)**
- **½ cup chopped fresh cilantro, plus whole leaves for garnish**
- **1 cup couscous, cooked according to package directions**
- **Harissa or other chile sauce to taste**

Heat the oven to 200°F. Pat the fish fillets dry and season all over with ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. Put the flour in a wide, shallow dish and lightly dredge the fish in the flour, shaking off any excess.

Heat the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Arrange the fish skin side down in the pan so the fillets fit without touching. Cook undisturbed for 4 minutes. With a spatula, peek under a fillet to see if the skin is golden-brown and crisp. If not, cook 1 minute more. Flip the fillets and cook until lightly golden-brown and just cooked through, an additional 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack set over a baking sheet and keep warm in the oven.

Reduce the heat to medium, add the cumin seeds to the skillet, and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 10 seconds. Add the tomatoes, ½ tsp. salt, and 3 Tbs. water and cook until they become saucy, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the chickpeas and cook until heated through, about 3 minutes. Add the preserved lemon (or lemon zest) and chopped cilantro. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Scrape a fork through the couscous to fluff it, and then divide it among 4 dinner plates. Place the fish skin side up on the couscous. Spoon on the chickpea mixture and garnish with the harissa and a scattering of cilantro leaves. If desired, drizzle extra-virgin olive oil over the fish at the table.



braised pacific halibut with leeks, mushrooms, and clams

Clams give this dish a special briny flavor. Like all bivalves, clams help maintain marine ecosystems; Manila clams are a particularly good choice because they are sustainably farmed.

Serves 4

- **4 oz. (½ cup) unsalted butter**
- **½ lb. oyster or hen of the woods mushrooms, thinly sliced (about 4 cups)**
- **3 large leeks, white and light-green parts only, thinly sliced (about 4 cups)**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **3 cups lower-salt chicken broth**
- **4 skinless Pacific halibut fillets (about 4 oz. each)**
- **16 to 24 small clams, such as Manila or littlenecks, scrubbed**
- **1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**

Melt the butter over medium heat in an 11- or 12-inch straight-sided sauté pan with a lid. Add the mushrooms and leeks and season lightly with salt and pepper. Cook gently, stirring occasionally, until softened but not browned, 7 to 8 minutes. Add the broth, raise the heat to medium high, and bring to a boil. **Season the halibut** with salt and pepper. Nestle the fish and clams among the vegetables in the skillet. Bring the broth back to a boil, cover tightly, and reduce the heat to low. Cook gently until the fish is just cooked through and the clams have opened, about 7 minutes. If all of the clams are not open, remove the fish and the open clams and continue cooking until the remaining clams open, another 2 to 3 minutes. Discard any clams that haven't opened by this time. **Serve the fish** in warmed shallow soup bowls, topped with leeks and mushrooms, surrounded by clams and broth, and sprinkled with chopped parsley.



FISH FACTS



PACIFIC HALIBUT

Why this fish Pacific halibut, unlike Atlantic halibut, comes from well-managed fisheries that have not suffered the steep population decline affecting Atlantic halibut. Also, Pacific ocean temperatures are colder year-round, so the halibut isn't prey to the warm-water-loving parasites that make Atlantic halibut an iffy proposition in all but the coldest months.

Why we love it With its delicate flavor and texture, halibut gives its best performance when barely cooked through. Overcook it, and it'll be very dry. It has a smooth, buttery texture, almost like firm custard. Its subtle flavor should not be overpowered by aggressive sauces or marinades. Halibut pairs well with tarragon and chives, potatoes, and juicy greens like spinach and Swiss chard.

Fresh clues

When buying fish fillets, examine the flesh, which should be moist and glistening and without any large gaps. Dry-looking flesh is a sign of age.

Fresh fish should not smell strong or fishy but should have a mild, fresh scent suggestive of the sea.

When buying skin-on fillets, look for intact skin and make sure the scales were properly removed. Most fish skin is edible and delicious, especially when cooked until crisp.

FISH FACTS



ATLANTIC MACKEREL

Why this fish If ever there was a diamond in the rough, it's Atlantic mackerel. Prized by the Japanese for the robust flavor it delivers in sushi preparations, it has until recently been overlooked by American cooks, who have favored milder-tasting fish. But with its high omega-3 oil content, mackerel is a heart-healthy choice that's growing in popularity. Plus, the methods used to catch it don't damage the ocean's ecosystem, so it's a good sustainable choice.

Why we love it Mackerel's rich, strong flavor is exactly why we like it. This assertiveness pairs well with complex ingredients like miso and soy (as in this recipe) and is complemented by citrus and bright vinaigrettes. It's delicious sautéed or roasted but too oily for poaching.



miso-roasted atlantic mackerel

Mackerel can be bony, so use tweezers or needle-nose pliers to remove any pin bones. Also, its oily nature causes it to develop a fishy flavor fast, so always buy the freshest fish possible and eat it the same day.

Serves 4

- **¼ cup white or yellow miso**
- **¼ cup honey**
- **1 Tbs. toasted Asian sesame oil**
- **2 tsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce**
- **8 boneless, skin-on Atlantic mackerel fillets (3½ to 4 oz. each), scaled**
- **2 to 3 Tbs. vegetable oil; more for the baking sheet**
- **4 lemon wedges or slices**

In a large bowl, whisk the miso, honey, sesame oil, and soy sauce into a smooth paste. Add the mackerel fillets and toss to coat with the marinade. Marinate for 20 minutes at room temperature. Meanwhile, heat the oven to 350°F.

Wipe the marinade from the skin side of the fillets. Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a 12-inch cast-iron or nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches to avoid crowding the pan, cook the fillets skin side down until the skin darkens and crisps slightly, 3 to 4 minutes. As each batch finishes, transfer the fillets skin side down to a lightly oiled baking sheet. Add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil to the skillet between batches if it seems dry. Once all the fillets are seared, put the baking sheet in the oven and bake until the flesh is flaky when poked with a paring knife, 5 minutes. Serve garnished with lemon wedges or slices.

Jay Weinstein is a New York City-based food writer and former chef. His latest book is The Ethical Gourmet. ◘





the wine life

For Paul Speck and his family, wine and food—both from one small piece of land in Ontario—are what it's all about.

BY DENISE MICKELSEN

PAUL SPECK, ONE-TIME CITY BOY turned philosopher turned winemaker, is tearing the foil from a bottle of sparkling wine as he gets ready for a Friday night dinner with his two younger brothers and their wives. It's a bone-dry sparkler from their family winery—Henry of Pelham Family Estate Winery in St. Catharines, Ontario—and with a splash of their Cabernet Franc ice wine, it makes for a killer cocktail.

Melissa, Paul's wife, is busy arranging "dessert": an all-Ontario cheese plate with fresh fruit and toasted nuts. Her menu for tonight—a juicy stuffed pork roast, beets with fresh goat cheese, sautéed broccoli raab, and a lentil salad—comes straight from neighborhood shops and farmers' markets, including a family-owned butcher shop across the street from her children's school.

It may be fall in St. Catharines, but there's still some warmth in the air, so Paul is cooking the garlic-and-herb-stuffed pork on a rotisserie. "I'm always trying new things on the grill," says Paul. "We have these big dinners together about once a month, so I've got plenty of chances to experiment. Planning the menus and the wines—ours or someone else's—is practically a family pastime."

Wine and food were not always Paul's passions. "I studied philosophy in college, and I actually wanted to be a lawyer in Toronto," he explains as he checks on the pork that's filling the patio with a rich, garlicky perfume. "But my dad asked me to come help run the winery, and it turns out I was lucky to be in this place at the right time." Whatever you want to call it—luck or fate or a father's wish—the timing was ideal. Just as Paul began managing the family business (he'd later become the winery's president), the premium wine industry in Ontario began to take off. And as Henry of Pelham grew, so did Paul's passion for making wine. (For more, see The Wine Thinker, page 78.)

Making—and drinking—wine is much more than a job for Paul and his brothers: It's a lifestyle, one that includes good food. As they stand on the patio, sipping cocktails and nibbling on prosciutto and oil-cured olives before dinner, talk turns to a New Zealand rosé that Paul wants his brothers to try. "It's made from Cabernet Franc, which we grow, too. European-style grapes like Cab Franc, Chardonnay, and Riesling, they all grow well here and make wines that express this part of the world. That's key for us."

Plates are passed and filled, and more bottles are opened—Henry of Pelham's lush, fruity reserve Cabernet-Merlot blend is ideal with the smoky, grilled pork roast and gently bitter broccoli raab. The beet salad with goat cheese and toasted pecans is creamy and tangy and crunchy all at once, and earthy lentils and scallions get a kick from sherry vinaigrette.

Later, Melissa serves the cheese plate and Paul pours their Riesling ice wine. One cheese in particular, a buttery, cow's milk, washed-rind cheese called Niagara Gold, captures everyone's attention. It's made less than 10 miles from the winery, and it pairs perfectly with the cold, sweet wine. For Paul Speck and his brothers, this is what it's all about—great wine and food, all from this corner of Canada.







From far left: **All in a day's work (if you can call it that). Paul Speck shares a toast with members of Ontario's liquor board. White wines in the tasting room. Melissa and Paul welcome his brothers, Matthew and Daniel, and their wives, Jillian and Louise, to their home for dinner. Why the name Henry of Pelham? The winery, which is on Pelham Road, was named after Henry Smith, son of Paul's ancestor, Nicholas Smith, who in 1794, settled the land upon which the winery sits.**

HARVEST DINNER

Tuscan-Style Roast Pork
with Rosemary, Sage, and Garlic

Sautéed Broccoli Raab
with Balsamic Vinegar

Beet Salad with Oregano, Pecans,
and Goat Cheese

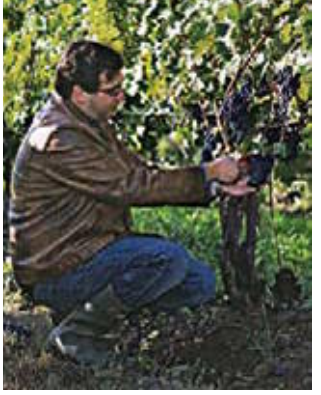
Lentil Salad with Sherry Vinaigrette

Henry of Pelham 2007 Barrel-Fermented Chardonnay; 2006 Reserve Cabernet-Merlot; 2008 Dry Rosé

Ontario cheese plate with fresh fruit

Henry of Pelham 2007 Riesling Ice Wine

Recipes begin on the next page.



the wine thinker

Paul Speck believes that fine wine is grown, not made. After all, a bottle of wine is only as good as its grapes.

The land Henry of Pelham Family Estate Winery sits near the base of the Niagara Escarpment (the steep cliff over which Niagara Falls runs) in the Short Hills Bench sub-appellation of Niagara. "The soil is heavy clay with lots of limestone and shale sediment spread throughout," Paul explains. "The clay naturally restricts the root growth of the vines, which is a good thing. Low yields and small volume are perfect for growing premium wines. And the sediment gives the grapes—especially Riesling and Chardonnay—a great natural acidity and minerality."

The climate "We're sandwiched between Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment, so there's a triangle of warm air from the lake and cool air from the escarpment flowing over the vineyards," says Paul. These conditions are ideal for growing both ice wine and red wine grapes, with temperatures as hot as 85°F in the summer, and as cold as 10°F in the winter.

The wines Three-quarters of the grapes that go into Henry of Pelham wines come from their own vineyards, which, for a small 225-acre winery (170 acres of which are under vine), is significant. The other quarter comes from neighboring vineyards in Niagara. "We will always be 100 percent Niagara. That way, when you buy our wines you're getting something special from this part of the world."



tuscan-style roast pork with rosemary, sage, and garlic

This juicy roast (shown on page 77) gets a flavorful, burnished crust from its time on a rotisserie grill. If you don't have a rotisserie, you can grill the pork over indirect heat for equally delicious results. Steer clear of pork loins labeled "extra tender" or "guaranteed tender," because they've been treated with sodium phosphate and water and will be too salty if brined.

Serves 6 to 8

FOR THE BRINED PORK

- **3 oz. kosher salt (¾ cup if using Diamond Crystal; 6 Tbs. if using Morton)**
- **¼ cup packed light brown sugar**
- **3 medium cloves garlic, smashed and peeled**
- **3 large sprigs fresh rosemary**
- **3 large sprigs fresh sage**
- **1 3-lb. all-natural boneless pork loin, trimmed of excess fat**

FOR THE HERB PASTE

- **8 medium cloves garlic, peeled**
- **¼ cup fresh rosemary leaves**
- **¼ cup fresh sage leaves**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**

BRINE THE PORK

In a 3- to 4-quart saucepan, combine the salt, sugar, garlic, and herb sprigs with 2 cups of water. Stir over high heat just until the salt and sugar dissolve. Add 6 more cups of water and cool to room temperature. Transfer to a large container, add the pork, cover, and refrigerate for 8 to 18 hours.

MAKE THE HERB PASTE

Put the garlic, rosemary, sage, 1 Tbs. salt, and 1 tsp. pepper in a large mortar and pound to a coarse paste with the pestle. Add the oil and use the pestle to work it into the garlic paste. If you don't have a mortar and pestle, combine all the ingredients in a mini food processor and pulse into a coarse paste.

BUTTERFLY AND SEASON THE PORK

Remove the pork from the brine and pat it dry (discard the brine). Butterfly the pork loin by making a horizontal slit down the length of the loin, cutting almost through to the other side. Open the meat like a book. Spread half of the herb paste over the inner surface of the roast; then fold it back to its original shape. Tie the roast at 1-inch intervals with butcher's twine and then spread the remaining herb paste over the entire outer surface.

GRILL THE PORK

Set up a grill for indirect rotisserie cooking according to the manufacturer's instructions. Heat the grill to 350°F. When ready to cook, skewer the roast lengthwise on the rotisserie spit and let it rotate on the grill, covered, until an instant-read thermometer inserted near the center of the roast registers 145°F, 35 to 45 minutes.

If you don't have a rotisserie, set up your grill for indirect grilling. Heat the grill to 350°F. Put the roast in the cool zone on the grill, and cook as directed above, turning the roast about every 10 minutes.

Remove the roast from the spit if necessary and transfer it to a cutting board. Let stand for 5 minutes, remove the string, and slice thinly. Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.

Make ahead: The pork must be brined 8 to 18 hours ahead. You can also butterfly and season the roast with the herb paste up to 4 hours before grilling. Refrigerate, but let sit at room temperature while you heat the grill.

Food styling by Allison Ehri Kreitler

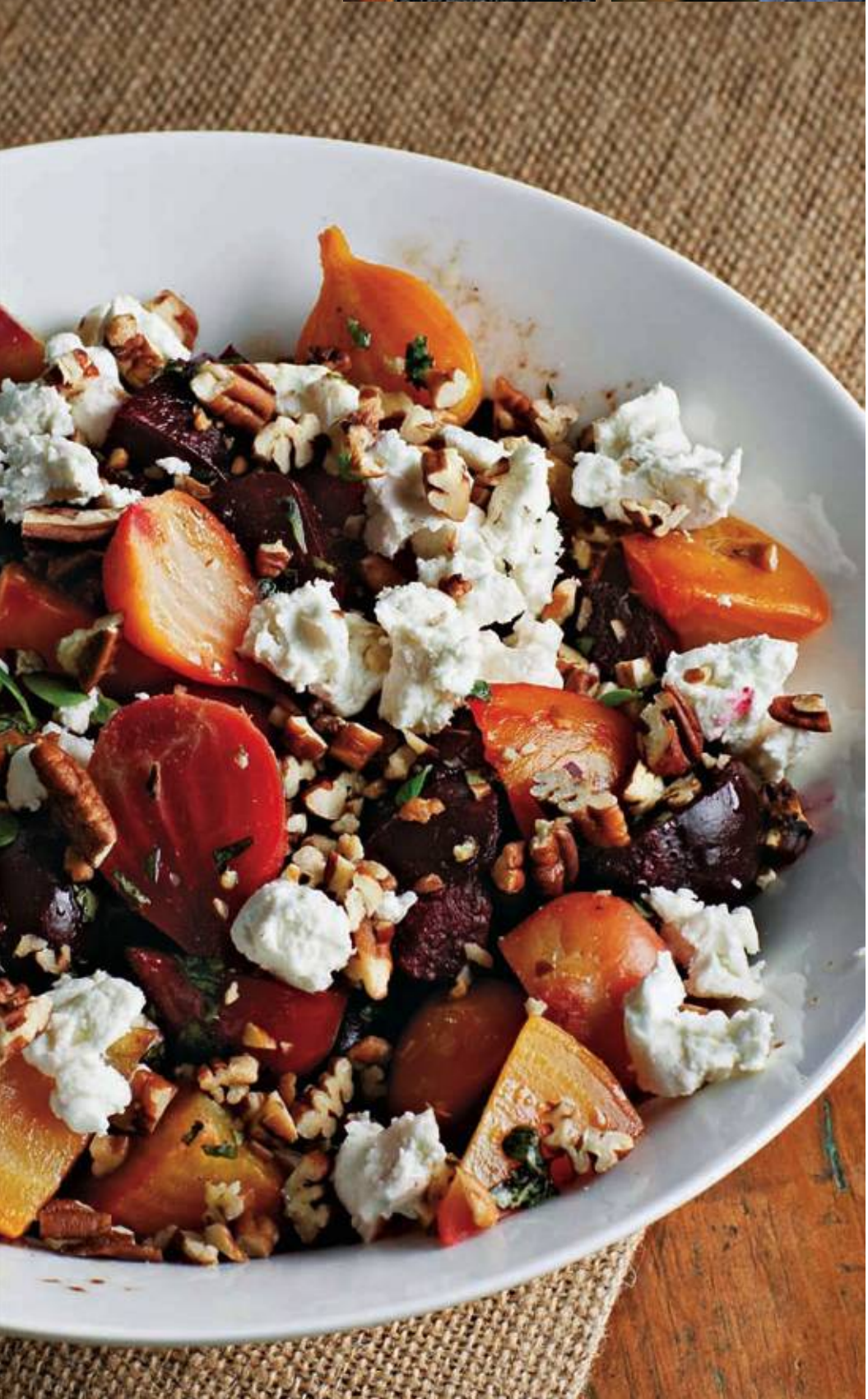
Photographs by Scott Phillips







From far left: **Paul inspects Cabernet Sauvignon grapes that are almost ready for harvest. Offerings in the Henry of Pelham tasting room. Melissa enjoys a cocktail before dinner. The winery's sparkling wine ferments in the bottle for 30 months.**



beet salad with oregano, pecans, and goat cheese

Beets and goat cheese are a classic pairing, but for a twist, try substituting blue cheese for the goat cheese and walnuts for the pecans.

Serves 6 to 8

- **8 to 10 medium beets (red, golden, or a combination)**
- **3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **3 Tbs. aged balsamic vinegar**
- **Sea salt or kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **4 oz. soft goat cheese, crumbled**
- **2 Tbs. chopped fresh oregano**
- **¼ cup chopped lightly toasted pecans**

If the beets have leaves and stems, trim off the leaves and all but ¼ inch of the stems. Wash the beets. In a large saucepan or stockpot fit with a steamer basket, steam the beets until a paring knife enters them easily, 30 to 45 minutes, depending on their size. Set aside until cool enough to handle but still warm.

Peel the beets; the skin will rub right off. Trim and discard the tops and tails and cut the beets into thick wedges. Transfer the beets to a large serving bowl and drizzle with the olive oil and vinegar. Season with a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Sprinkle the goat cheese, oregano, and pecans over the beets and serve.

Make ahead: You can cook, peel, and cut the beets up to 6 hours ahead. Refrigerate, and return to room temperature before finishing.

For more information on Henry of Pelham Family Estate Winery, go to henryofpelham.com.



sautéed broccoli raab with balsamic vinegar

Mildly bitter broccoli raab is tempered with sweet balsamic vinegar, garlic, anchovies, and a touch of hot chile. Even if you think you don't like anchovies, don't leave them out—their flavor blends into the background and gives the dish a savory edge that is absolutely delicious.

Serves 6 to 8

- **¼ cup aged balsamic vinegar**
- **Kosher salt**
- **2 large bunches broccoli raab (2½ lb.), thick stems trimmed, leaves and florets rinsed well**
- **4 medium cloves garlic, lightly crushed and peeled**
- **3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **4 oil-packed anchovy fillets, finely chopped**
- **¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes**
- **Freshly ground black pepper**

In a small saucepan, boil the vinegar over medium-high heat until reduced by half, about 4 minutes. Set aside.

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Have a large bowl of ice water ready. Blanch the broccoli raab in the boiling water for 3 minutes (the water needn't return to a boil). Drain it and transfer to the ice water to cool. Drain well and gently squeeze the broccoli raab to remove excess water.

Heat the garlic and oil in a large skillet over medium heat until the garlic begins to turn golden, 2 minutes; remove and discard the garlic. Add the anchovies, mashing them with the back of a wooden spoon until fragrant, 30 seconds. Add the pepper flakes and cook, stirring constantly, for 5 to 10 seconds. Add the broccoli raab and cook, stirring often, until tender and heated through, 3 to 4 minutes. Drizzle with the vinegar and season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to a platter and serve.

Make ahead: You can reduce the vinegar and blanch the broccoli raab up to 6 hours ahead. Leave the vinegar at room temperature and refrigerate the broccoli raab, returning it to room temperature before finishing the dish.





lentil salad with sherry vinaigrette

Ellen Smythe, Melissa Speck's aunt, gave her this recipe when she and Paul were first married. It's been a staple of the Specks' dinner parties ever since.

Serves 6 to 8

- **1 lb. (2 ¼ cups) French green lentils (lentils du Puy)**
- **Kosher salt**
- **¼ cup white wine vinegar or sherry vinegar**
- **Freshly ground black pepper**
- **6 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **4 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced**
- **1 tsp. minced garlic**

Pick over and rinse the lentils and put them in a 4-quart saucepan. Cover them with 2 quarts cold water and add 2 tsp. salt. Bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat, partially cover the pot, and simmer until the lentils are slightly firm but tender and still intact, 20 to 30 minutes. Drain and run cold water over them. Drain again and transfer to a large bowl.

Sprinkle the lentils with the vinegar, 1 tsp. salt, and a few grinds of black pepper. Stir gently to combine, taking care not to mash the lentils. Stir in the oil, 1 Tbs. at a time, and finally, the scallions and garlic.

Let stand at room temperature for about 1 hour; then season to taste and serve.

Make ahead: For the best flavor, make this salad at least 1 hour and up to 3 hours before serving.

Recipes by Melissa Speck. Text by Fine Cooking *associate editor Denise Mickelsen.*

For sources, see Where to Buy It





From far left: Ron Giesbrecht, Henry of Pelham's winemaker, and Paul taste a Baco Noir aging in American oak barrels. Paul pours for Melissa. Dinner is served in the Specks' garden.



ontario cheese plate with fresh fruit

Paul often brings home Canadian cheeses from The Coach House Café and Cheese Shoppe, located on the Henry of Pelham property. For this dinner, Ontario cheeses take center stage (counterclockwise from front): Ramembert, a sheep's milk bloomy-rind cheese from Ewenity Dairy; Niagara Gold, a semisoft washed-rind cow's milk cheese from Upper Canada Cheese Co.; and a cow's milk smoked blue called Blue Haze, from Provincial Affineurs. Fresh fruit, olives, and toasted nuts round out the plate. Ice wine is the perfect accompaniment.

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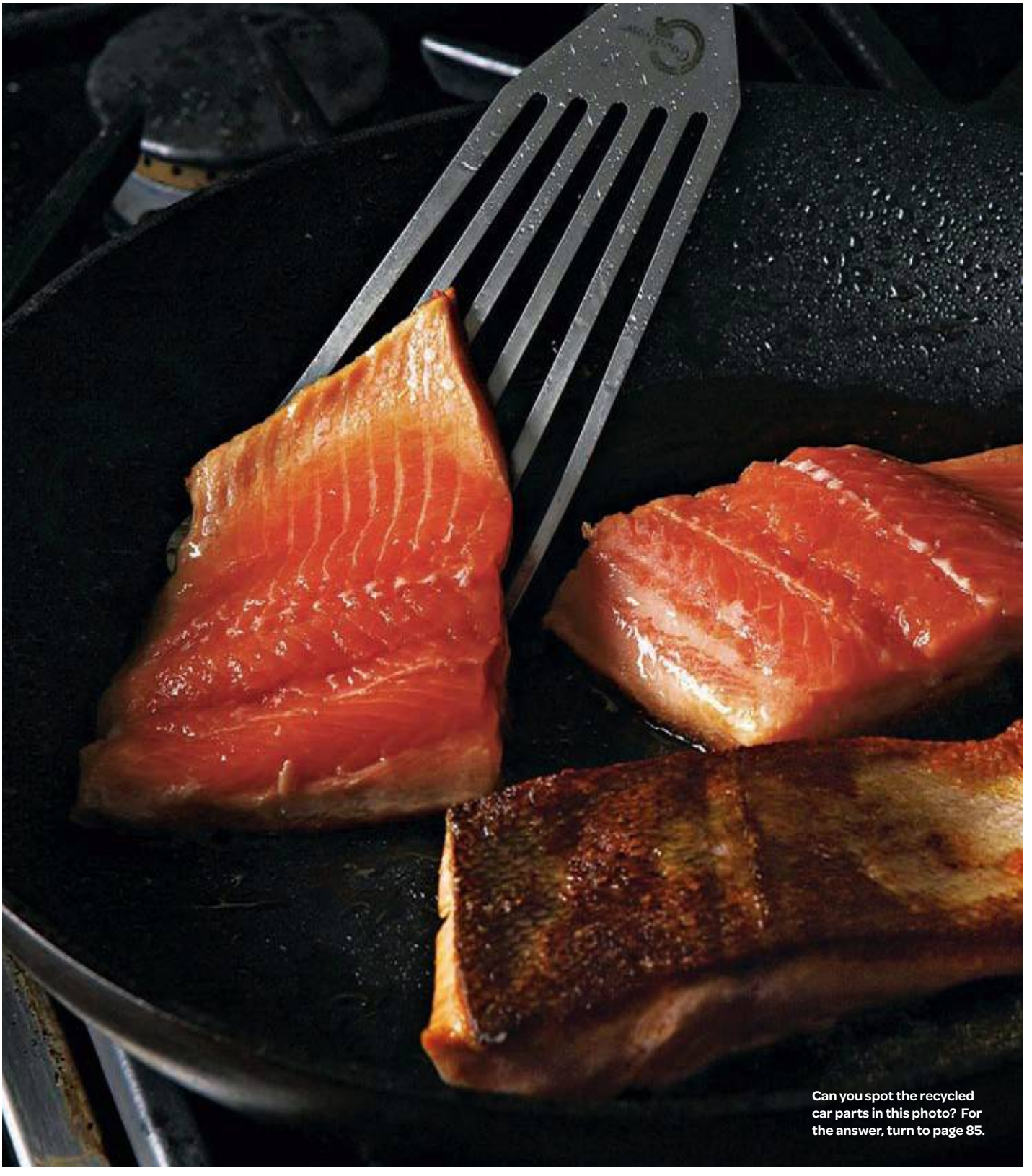
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TEST KITCHEN

Tips/Techniques/Equipment/Ingredients/Glossary



Can you spot the recycled car parts in this photo? For the answer, turn to page 85.

TECHNIQUE

Advanced crimping

CRIMPING A PIECRUST IS NOT ONLY DECORATIVE but also useful: It helps to hold up the edge of a single-crust pie. The pie story on page 56 covers the most basic crimping style. Once you get the hang of it, you can be more creative. Here are **three more ways** to crimp a crust:

Scalloped edge



Form a curve with your index finger on the inside edge of the dough and press the edge into gentle curves. Be sure that the scalloped edge is resting firmly on the edge of the pan and not hanging beyond it.

Rope edge



Using the side of your thumb or the flat edge of a table knife, press gently into the dough edge at a 45-degree angle (diagonal to the pan). Repeat every ½ to ¾ inch or so until you've come full circle. Be sure not to press all the way down to the pie plate, or you may sever the dough.

Wheat edge



Holding a pair of scissors at a 45-degree angle, snip the edge at ½- to ¾-inch intervals. With your fingertips, pull each segment in alternating directions toward the inside and outside of the pie. Pinch the tips of each segment into points and smooth each segment as needed.

—Nicole Rees

Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Jennifer Armentrout

Watch the video! For a demonstration of these piecrust techniques, go to FineCooking.com/extras.

TECHNIQUE

Crispy duck skin

AS COLD-WATER CREATURES, DUCKS ARE WELL INSULATED, which is a nice way of saying that they have a lot of fat. Without proper attention to that fat, duck skin can cook up flabby. To avoid this, you need to score the skin and slowly render most of the fat. Not only does this method produce nice, crisp skin, but it also gives you duck fat to save for other uses, like roasting or sautéing potatoes.



With a sharp knife, cut a diamond-shaped cross-hatch pattern through the skin into the fat, making sure not to cut into the flesh.



Slowly cook the duck skin side down over medium heat until much of the fat has melted out and the skin is rich amber-brown and crisp. Then turn and finish cooking the duck.

—Melissa Pellegrino

EQUIPMENT

Recycled kitchen tools

Eco-friendly materials are big in the cookware market right now, and one of our favorite green lines is Lamson & Goodnow's GoodNow recycled cooking tools. The business end of each tool contains 90 percent high-carbon stainless steel recycled from old appliances and car parts. And though you'd never know it to look at them, the heat-resistant handles are made from 100 percent recycled paper compressed with nonpetroleum resin. Adding to their green pedigree, the tools are made in Lamson's 170-year-old Massachusetts factory, which is powered with hydroelectric energy produced from a river that runs through the factory grounds, and all of the manufacturing scraps are recycled.

The line includes assorted turners and spatulas, plus a potato masher. For handling delicate foods like fish fillets, you can't beat this 3x6-inch chef's slotted turner (a.k.a. fish spatula). Try using this tool with one of the fish recipes beginning on page 68. See Where to Buy It, page 93, to order.

—Jennifer Armentrout





INGREDIENT

Lyle's Golden Syrup

A FAMILIAR PANTRY STAPLE in the U.K., Lyle's Golden Syrup is a full-flavored cane sugar syrup that's used as an ingredient in both baking and savory cooking, and as a topping for foods like pancakes and ice cream. In this issue, it lends its rich, caramelly flavor to the Coffee-Toffee Pecan Pie on page 63.

Pecan pie is traditionally made with corn syrup, but corn syrup lacks great flavor and often produces a slightly runny filling. Replacing some of the corn syrup with the thicker, sweeter Golden Syrup results in a more stable filling with better flavor.

Look for Lyle's Golden Syrup in your supermarket near the honey and maple syrup. You'll find it either in the traditional tin pictured here or in a plastic squeeze bottle. If your store doesn't carry it, see page 93 for a mail-order source. Store the syrup at cool room temperature. If crystals develop, heat the syrup before using to dissolve them.

—J. A.

EQUIPMENT

Food mill: buy or don't buy?

A FOOD MILL IS ONE OF THOSE TOOLS YOU MAY NOT USE VERY OFTEN, but you'll be glad to have one when you need it. In this issue alone, two recipes call for a food mill: the Maple Apple-Pear Butter on page 20 and the Rustic Mashed Potatoes on page 33. Making apple sauce (or butter) and mashed potatoes are two of the three main uses for a food mill. The third is separating seeds and skins from tomatoes.



HOW IT WORKS

A bowl-shaped **hopper** holds the food to be milled. A **hook** and a handle help secure the hopper over a separate bowl to catch the milled food.

A hand-driven **crank** pushes an angled **paddle**, which smears and forces the food through a disk.

The **disk,** perforated with colander-like holes, strains the food, separating out the unwanted bits (seeds, skins, etc).

HOW TO CHOOSE A FOOD MILL

The best models feature deep hoppers and paddles that fit snugly against the disks. They come apart easily for cleaning and have interchangeable disks with various hole sizes, so you can control how finely strained your food is.

We particularly like two models. The Cuisipro food mill has three disks (2 mm, 3 mm, and 4 mm) and a little rotating scraper on the underside of the disk that knocks the food off as you turn the handle. The Rösle food mill comes with two disks (1 mm and 3 mm), and several other sizes are available for purchase. An antifriction pad between the paddle and disk makes it slightly easier to operate than the Cuisipro. To order either, see Where to Buy It, page 93.

COOK'S TIP:

If the disk becomes clogged during milling, turn the crank backwards, and the paddle becomes a scraper that clears the clog.

—J. A.

TIP

Perfect carrot sticks

In the Pomegranate-Balsamic-Glazed Carrots recipe on page 53, the carrots need to be cut in consistent widths to cook evenly. Here's the method we use.

Cut the peeled carrots into 2-inch lengths and then halve each piece lengthwise. Lay them cut side down on the cutting board and slice lengthwise about ⅜ inch thick.

—Susie Middleton



INGREDIENTS

Saba and verjus

In the grape recipes beginning on page 40, we call for two out-of-the-ordinary ingredients, both related to grapes: saba and verjus. Here's the low-down on both.

Saba is reduced grape must (unfermented grape juice) from Italy. This brown, syrupy substance has a sweet, concentrated, almost prune-like flavor. Depending on region, dialect, or translation, it can go by several names: *saba* is from Sardinia, *sapa* is from Emiglia Romagna; in Apulia, the syrup is called *vin cotto,* and in yet another Italian region the same may be called *mosto cotto*. Other countries with wine-growing regions also have versions of this grape-must syrup—Turkey's is called *pekmez,* and in Palestine it's *dibs*. Whatever its name, enjoy the syrup with roasted grapes or pears, drizzled on strong cheeses such as Parmigiano-Reggiano or Gorgonzola, or brushed on roasted lamb or duck. Store in a dark place at cool room temperature.

A byproduct of wine production, **verjus** (French for "green juice") is unfermented, unripe grape juice. In the vineyard, clusters of unripe grapes are picked to allow other grapes on the same vine to ripen more fully for winemaking. The "thinned" grapes are pressed, resulting in a juice with a sweet-tart taste—something like a thin Sauternes with a lemonade finish. Verjus is lower in acid than vinegar but still adds bright flavor to foods. And because of its low acidity, verjus doesn't compete with the flavor of wine. It's great on green salads and in fruit salads, in sauces for chicken and fish, and it also makes a wonderful addition to a grape sorbet or granita. Opened verjus will keep in the refrigerator for up to two months.

Saba and verjus are both available at specialty foods stores or online; see Where to Buy It, page 93, for sources.

—Jeanne Kelley



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broiled chicken thighs with chipotle sauce

Roasted red peppers and spicy, smoky ground chipotle chiles make this sauce a knockout. Serve with roasted potatoes.

Serves 4

- **1½ tsp. ground cumin**
- **1 tsp. packed light brown sugar**
- **¾ tsp. ground chipotle chile**
- **¼ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **Kosher salt**
- **8 boneless, skinless chicken thighs (about 1¾ lb.), trimmed**
- **3 Tbs. olive oil**
- **1 medium clove garlic**
- **1 large or 2 small jarred roasted red peppers, drained**
- **1 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh cilantro**

Position a rack about 6 inches from the broiler and heat the broiler on high. In a small bowl, combine 1 tsp. of the cumin, the sugar, ¼ tsp. of the chipotle, the cinnamon, and 1 tsp. salt. In a medium bowl, toss the chicken with 1 Tbs. of the oil, and then toss with the spice mixture.

Arrange the chicken on a rack set over a rimmed baking sheet lined with foil and broil until the chicken browns lightly on top, about 5 minutes. Flip the chicken and continue to broil until browned and cooked through, about 5 minutes more.

Meanwhile, coarsely chop the garlic and sprinkle it with ¼ tsp. salt. Using the flat side of a chef's knife, smear and mash the garlic and salt together to form a coarse paste. Transfer the garlic paste to a food processor and add the roasted red pepper, the remaining 2 Tbs. oil, the remaining ½ tsp. each of cumin and chipotle, and ½ tsp. salt. Purée into a smooth sauce.

Garnish the chicken with the cilantro and serve with the sauce.

—Tony Rosenfeld



smoked salmon hash with chive sour cream

If you're in the mood for "breakfast for dinner," serve this with a fried or poached egg on top. A fresh spinach salad makes a good side.

Serves 4

- **2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **3 large red potatoes (about 1½ lb.), cut into ½-inch dice**
- **1 small yellow onion, roughly chopped**
- **1 small green bell pepper, stemmed, cored, seeded, and finely chopped**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **⅔ cup sour cream**
- **2 Tbs. thinly sliced fresh chives**
- **1½ Tbs. fresh lemon juice**
- **½ tsp. Dijon mustard**
- **1 4-oz. hot-smoked salmon fillet, skinned and broken into large flakes (about 1 cup)**

Heat the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the potatoes, onion, bell pepper, 1 tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper and cook, stirring often, until golden-brown, about 10 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium and continue cooking until the potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes more; season to taste with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, combine the sour cream, 1 Tbs. of the chives, ½ Tbs. of the lemon juice, the mustard, ½ tsp. salt, and ⅛ tsp. pepper in a medium bowl and stir well; set aside.

When the potatoes are tender, gently fold in the salmon and the remaining 1 Tbs. lemon juice and continue cooking until heated through, about 2 minutes more. Transfer the hash to plates. Garnish with the remaining 1 Tbs. chives and serve with a dollop of the chive sour cream.

—Liz Pearson

Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Safaya Tork, except beef ragù, Heidi Johannsen Stewart

beef ragù over spaghetti squash with garlic bread

Here, spaghetti squash is used like pasta to delicious effect, and a quick garlic bread rounds out the meal.

Serves 4

- ¼ **baguette, halved lengthwise**
- 1½ **Tbs. unsalted butter, melted**
- 6 **medium cloves garlic**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 **small (2½-lb.) spaghetti squash, halved lengthwise and seeded**
- 1 **Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 **lb. lean ground beef**
- 1 **small yellow onion, finely chopped**
- 1 **15-oz. can crushed tomatoes**
- ¼ **cup coarsely chopped fresh basil**
- ¼ **cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano**

Heat the oven to 375°F. Arrange the bread cut side up on a foil-lined baking sheet. Brush it with the butter. Peel and chop the garlic. Divide the garlic in half and sprinkle one-half with a generous pinch of salt. Using the flat side of a chef's knife, mince and mash the garlic and salt together to form a smooth paste. Spread each piece of bread evenly with garlic paste and season with salt and pepper. Bake until light golden-brown and crisp, 12 to 14 minutes. Cut each piece in half to make 4 pieces total, and cover with foil to keep warm.

Meanwhile, arrange the spaghetti squash in a single layer in the bottom of a large, wide pot. (Don't worry if the squash halves don't lie completely flat in the pot.) Add ½ inch of water, cover the pot, and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook until the squash is tender enough to shred when raked with a fork but still somewhat crisp, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer the squash to a plate and set aside until cool enough to handle.

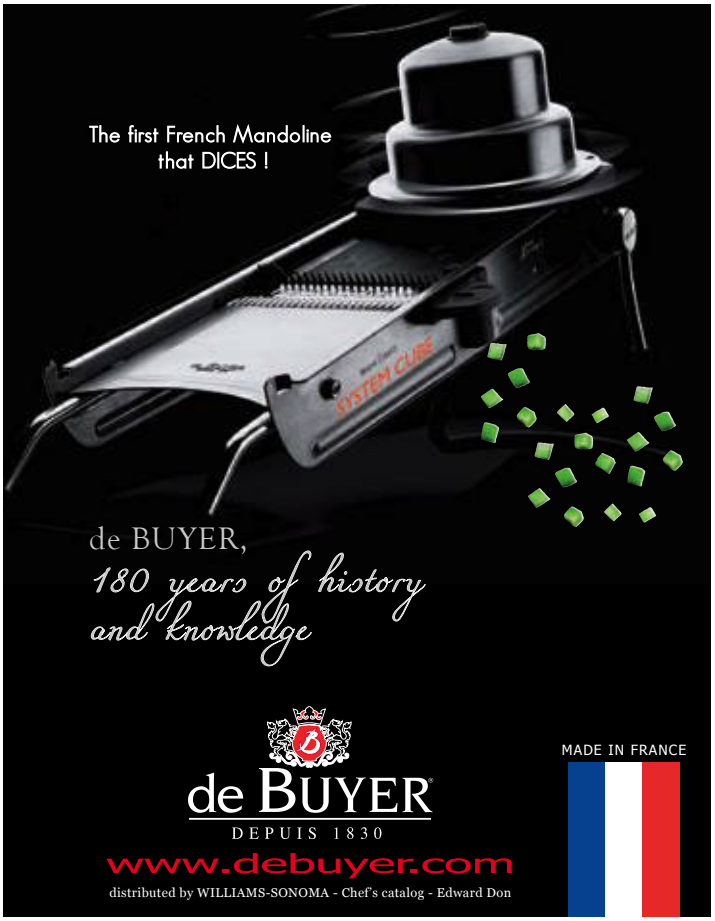
While the squash cooks, heat the oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the beef, the remaining chopped garlic, onion, ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper; cook, stirring to break up the meat, until just cooked through, 5 to 6 minutes. Drain and discard the fat if necessary. Add the tomatoes, basil, and ¼ cup water; stir well and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer for 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.



With a fork, rake the squash flesh into strands, transfer to plates, and season to taste with salt. Ladle the beef ragù over the squash and garnish with the Parmigiano. Serve with the garlic bread.

—Liz Pearson

Continued on page 90





stir-fried pork with kimchi and shiitake

There are many types of kimchi (Korean preserved vegetables), but spicy napa cabbage kimchi is the most popular and the best version for this recipe. It can be found at Asian markets and in the produce section of some large supermarkets. Steamed short-grain rice makes a good accompaniment to this dish.

Serves 4

- **1 pork tenderloin (12 to 16 oz.), trimmed of silverskin and cut crosswise ¼ inch thick**
- **1 Tbs. soy sauce**
- **Freshly ground black pepper**
- **3 Tbs. peanut or canola oil**
- **8 oz. fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems trimmed, caps cut into ¼-inch slices**
- **6 scallions, cut into 1½-inch lengths**
- **3 large cloves garlic, minced**
- **16 oz. napa cabbage kimchi, drained and very coarsely chopped (about 2¾ cups)**
- **3 Tbs. mirin (or 2 Tbs. sake or white wine plus 4 tsp. granulated sugar)**
- **1 Tbs. Asian sesame oil**
- **Kosher salt**
- **½ Tbs. toasted sesame seeds**

In a medium bowl, toss the pork, ½ Tbs. of the soy sauce, and ⅛ tsp. pepper.

Heat 1 Tbs. of the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until you see the first wisp of smoke. Swirl to coat the pan, then add half of the pork and stir-fry until brown in spots and no longer pink, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl. Add another 1 Tbs. of the oil to the skillet and repeat with the remaining pork.

Add the remaining 1 Tbs. of the oil to the pan and swirl to coat. Add the mushrooms and scallions and cook, stirring, until the mushrooms are shrunken in size and the scallions are wilted, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.

Add the kimchi, mirin, and the remaining ½ Tbs. soy sauce and cook, stirring frequently, until the liquid released by the kimchi is reduced to about ⅓ cup, about 3 minutes. (The amount of liquid released by the kimchi is somewhat unpredictable—if there is an excessive amount, cook until it reduces or spoon some of it off.) Add the pork and any accumulated juices and cook until heated through, 1 to 2 minutes more. Drizzle with the sesame oil and stir well. Season to taste with salt and pepper, sprinkle with the sesame seeds, and serve.

—Dawn Yanagihara





chocolate bark with ginger and pistachios

With a cup of coffee or tea, this is a quick and sweet end to dinner.

Serves 4

- **6 oz. bittersweet dark chocolate (70% to 72% cacao), chopped (1 cup)**
- **2 oz. white chocolate, chopped (⅓ cup; optional)**
- **3 Tbs. chopped salted pistachios**
- **3 Tbs. chopped dried apricots**
- **2 Tbs. chopped crystallized ginger**

In a small bowl, melt the dark chocolate in the microwave on high for 1 to 2 minutes. Stir until smooth.

Line a baking sheet with a silicone baking mat or waxed paper. Spread the melted dark chocolate into an approximately 8x5-inch rectangle.

If using the white chocolate, melt it in the same manner as the dark chocolate and drizzle it in a zigzag pattern across the dark chocolate.

Sprinkle with the chopped pistachios, apricots, and ginger and press gently to set them into the chocolate. Chill in the refrigerator for 10 minutes. Break into pieces and serve. Store any leftovers in the refrigerator.

—Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough

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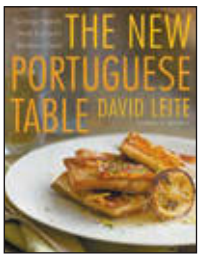
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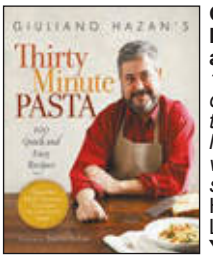
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- **For more information about Ontario cheeses,** call Provincial Fine Foods, 877-487-7768, or go to aboutcheese.ca.

french onion soup, page 64



- **Revol 7-oz. porcelain au gratin dishes** (similar to the one on page 65), $12.95, surlatable.com, 800-243-0852.
- **3½-inch grooved toothpicks,** $10 for 2,000 at pickonus.com, 800-874-2587; call for smaller orders.

From 125west.com, 888-921-9378:

- **Pillivuyt 15-oz. onion soup bowl,** $25.
- **Demeyere John Pawson 4.2-quart casserole** with lid, $365.



piecrust, page 56

- **Johnson Rose pie pan,** 9x7½x1¼ inches, $2.40, kitchensupply direct.com, 866-601-5734.
- **Tapered rolling pin,** $14, williams-sonoma.com, 877-812-6235.

grapes, page 40

- **Rectangular tart pan,** 14x4½ inches, $18.95, cooking.com/fc, 800-663-8810.
- **La Tourangelle roasted walnut oil,** $12.99 for a 500-ml bottle, igourmet.com, 877-446-8763.
- **Burl plate** in oyster, $45, dbohome.com, 860-364-6008.

vegetable sides, page 48

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repertoire, page 29

- **Pyrex 1-quart measuring cup,** $5.99, bedbathandbeyond.com, 800-462-3966.
- **Corningware 3-quart baking dish,** $19.99, target.com, 800-591-3869.

From cooking.com/fc, 800-663-8810:

- **Amco nonskid metal mixing bowls,** set of three for $34.95.
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From williams-sonoma.com, 877-812-6235:

- **Bulb baster,** $18.
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From crateandbarrel.com, 800-967-6696:

- **All-Clad MC2 10-inch, 3-quart straight-sided sauté pan,** $179.95.
- **Reversible carve-serve board,** $49.95.

menus, page 96

Spanish wine recommendations courtesy of Kerin Auth at Tinto Fino in New York City.

drinks, page 38

For information on buying Spanish wines, go to tintofino.com or call 212-254-0850.

test kitchen, page 83

- **Saba,** $14.50 for a 9-oz. jar, gourmetsardinia.com, 713-621-6858.
- **Verjus,** $5 for a 375-ml. bottle, wolffer.com/store, 631-537-5106.
- **Rösle food mill,** $117, rosleusa.com, 302-326-4801.
- **Cuisipro Deluxe food mill,** $105, surlatable.com, 800-243-0852.

From amazon.com, 800-201-7575:

- **Lamson GoodNow 3x6-inch chef's slotted turner,** $29.99.
- **Lyle's Golden Syrup,** $5.75 for an 11-oz. bottle.

sustainable fish, page 68



- **Shaoxing rice wine,** $5.50 for a 750-ml bottle, asiamex.com, 636-272-0604.

From chefshop.com, 800-596-0885:

- **Mustapha's Moroccan harissa,** $8.01 for a 10-oz. jar.
- **Mustapha's preserved lemons,** $7.99 for a 300-gram jar.

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www.japanesechefsknife.com

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www.bakedeco.com

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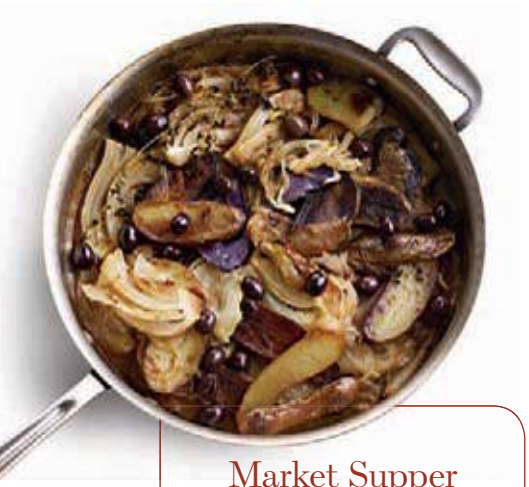
Woodbridge Winery *p. 28* For 25 years, we have aged our wines in small oak barrels and handcrafted each vintage. Woodbridge: Taste our small winery tradition™.
www.woodbridgewines.com

NUTRITION

Recipes	Calories (kcal)	Fat Cal (kcal)	Protein (g)	Carb (g)	Total Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Mono Fat (g)	Poly Fat (g)	Chol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)
PERSIMMONS, P. 15											
Fuyu Persimmon and Fennel Salad with Hazelnuts	350	230	5	31	26	3.5	18	3	0	105	8
FRUIT BUTTER, P. 20											
Maple Apple-Pear Butter (per 1 Tbs.)	35	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	10	1
FINGERLING POTATOES, P. 22											
Glazed Fingerling Potato Salad with Mustard Vinaigrette	410	320	7	17	36	13	18	3	55	690	2
Fingerling Galettes with Smoked Trout	210	130	10	10	14	5	7	1	55	340	1
Braised Fingerlings with Fennel, Olives, and Thyme	210	120	4	22	13	2	9	1.5	0	290	4
TURKEY DINNER, P. 29											
Dry-Rubbed Roast Turkey with Pan Gravy	570	240	73	3	27	8	9	7	210	1130	0
Bread Stuffing with Fresh Herbs	160	60	6	22	6	3	1.5	1	45	320	2
Rustic Mashed Potatoes	290	140	6	33	16	10	4	0.5	45	340	3
Cranberry Sauce with Caramelized Onions (per ¼ cup)	90	10	0	21	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	25	2
GOOD LIFE, P. 34											
Autumn Vegetable Soup	120	40	5	16	4.5	0.5	3	1	0	250	3
GRAPES, P. 40											
Frisée and Grape Salad with Verjus and Blue Cheese	130	70	4	13	8	2.5	1.5	3.5	10	320	2
Bulgur and Grape Salad with Walnuts and Currants	220	100	5	29	11	1	2	8	0	115	6
Moroccan-Spiced Scallops with Grape and Lemon Relish	320	130	29	17	15	2	10	2	55	560	2
Duck Breast with Saba and Grapes	320	110	27	21	12	3	6	2	140	390	1
Braised Chicken with Gewürztraminer and Grapes	560	260	34	18	29	10	12	5	145	430	1
Custard Tart with Wine-Poached Grapes	390	190	5	46	21	11	7	1.5	180	180	1
VEGETABLE SIDE DISHES, P. 48											
Roasted Turnips with Maple and Cardamom	140	70	1	16	8	2.5	3	2.5	10	320	3
Pomegranate-Balsamic-Glazed Carrots	110	60	1	13	7	2.5	3.5	0.5	10	280	3
Green Beans with Crispy Pancetta and Mushrooms	110	70	3	8	8	1.5	5	1	5	410	3
Creamy Baked Leeks with Garlic, Thyme, and Parmigiano	170	110	2	14	12	7	3.5	0.5	45	105	2
Brussels Sprouts with Toasted Hazelnut Butter	190	140	4	10	16	5	9	1.5	15	270	4
Bourbon Sweet Potato and Apple Casserole	430	250	5	40	28	12	11	4	60	170	7
PIECRUST, P. 56											
Coffee-Toffee Pecan Pie	810	440	8	87	49	17	19	8	135	430	4
Jamaican-Spiced Pumpkin Pie	430	190	7	53	22	15	4.5	1	135	410	6
Fresh Pear Pie with Dried Cherries and Streusel	630	210	7	101	24	15	6	1	60	260	7
Ginger-Spice Cranberry-Apple Streusel Pie	610	220	6	94	25	13	6	4.5	55	190	4
FRENCH ONION SOUP, P. 64											
French Onion Soup	240	150	14	9	16	10	5	1	45	270	1
Roasted Beef Broth (per 1 cup)	40	15	5	1	1.5	0	0.5	0	0	15	0
French Onion Soup Dumplings (per 1 dumpling)	90	50	3	8	6	2.5	1.5	0	15	160	0
SUSTAINABLE FISH, P. 68											
Crisp Striped Bass with Preserved Lemon and Chickpeas	550	150	39	61	16	2.5	9	3.5	115	600	9
Pan-Seared Arctic Char with Olives and Potatoes	390	190	33	17	21	2	11	1.5	0	540	2
Steamed Black Cod with Scallions and Rice Wine	510	220	20	45	25	4.5	14	4.5	55	115	2
Braised Pacific Halibut with Mushrooms and Clams	480	250	40	17	28	15	7	2.5	125	460	3
Miso-Roasted Atlantic Mackerel	520	320	38	9	36	7	15	10	120	330	0
VINEYARD DINNER, P. 76											
Sautéed Broccoli Raab with Balsamic Vinegar	90	50	5	6	6	1	4	1	0	260	4
Beet Salad with Oregano, Pecans, and Goat Cheese	140	100	4	7	11	3	6	1.5	5	110	1
Tuscan-Style Roast Pork with Rosemary and Sage	290	140	32	2	16	4.5	9	1	85	1010	0
Lentil Salad with Sherry Vinaigrette	290	100	13	36	11	1.5	7	1	0	290	9
MAKE IT TONIGHT, P. 88											
Broiled Chicken Thighs with Chipotle Sauce	330	190	27	3	22	4.5	12	3.5	100	660	1
Stir-Fried Pork with Kimchi and Shiitake	340	160	23	17	18	3.5	8	5	55	1700	3
Smoked Salmon Hash with Chive Sour Cream	290	130	10	32	15	5	7	1.5	20	1030	4
Beef Ragù over Spaghetti Squash with Garlic Bread	370	170	26	27	19	8	8	1.5	80	410	6
Chocolate Bark with Ginger and Pistachios	380	170	6	45	19	11	7	1	0	80	6

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used. Optional ingredients with measured amounts are included; ingredients without specific quantities are not. Analyses are per serving; when a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used. When the quantities of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on ¼ tsp. salt and ⅛ tsp. pepper per serving for entrées, and ⅛ tsp. salt and 1/16 tsp. pepper per serving for side dishes.

MENUS



Market Supper

Frisée and Grape Salad
with Verjus and Blue Cheese
page 42

Tuscan-Style Pork
with Rosemary, Sage,
and Garlic
page 78

Braised Fingerling Potatoes
with Fennel, Olives, and Thyme
page 23

Fresh Pear Pie with Dried Cherries
and Brown Sugar Streusel
page 62

To drink: a lightly sweet blend of Moscatel and Sauvignon Blanc, like Gramona Gessami, 2008

Breakfast for Dinner

Smoked Salmon Hash
with Chive Sour Cream
page 88

Poached or fried eggs

Maple Apple-Pear Butter
page 20

Your Favorite Toast

To drink: Champagne Cocktails
FineCooking.com



A Big Thanksgiving

Dry-Rubbed Roast Turkey
with Pan Gravy
page 30

Buttermilk Mashed Potatoes
with Chives
FineCooking.com

Brussels Sprouts with Toasted
Hazelnut Butter
page 52

Pomegranate-
Balsamic-Glazed Carrots
page 53

Wild Rice Bread Dressing with
Apple, Apricot, and Sage
FineCooking.com

Coffee-Toffee Pecan Pie
page 63

To drink: a wine with medium acidity and soft tannins, like Wyatt Pinot Noir, 2006





Soup and Salad

Autumn Vegetable Soup
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Fuyu Persimmon and Fennel
Salad with Hazelnuts
page 16

French Onion Soup
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Glazed Fingerling Potato Salad
with Pancetta and Warm
Mustard Vinaigrette
page 22

Curried Carrot Soup
with Cilantro
FineCooking.com

Beet Salad with Oregano,
Pecans, and Goat Cheese
page 79

To drink, two wines for any night:
A classic Rioja like Zuazo Gaston, 2006, Vendimia Seleccionada 100% Tempranillo

or

A crisp, dry Albariño like Mar de Vinas, 2008, Rias Baixas

Friday Night Easy

Beef Ragù over Spaghetti Squash
with Garlic Bread
page 89

Sautéed Broccoli Raab with Balsamic Vinegar
page 80

Chocolate Bark with Ginger and Pistachios
page 90

To drink: an Imperial Pilsner, like Birra Moretti



Photographs by Scott Phillips; Spanish wine recommendations by Kerin Auth at Tinto Fino, New York, New York

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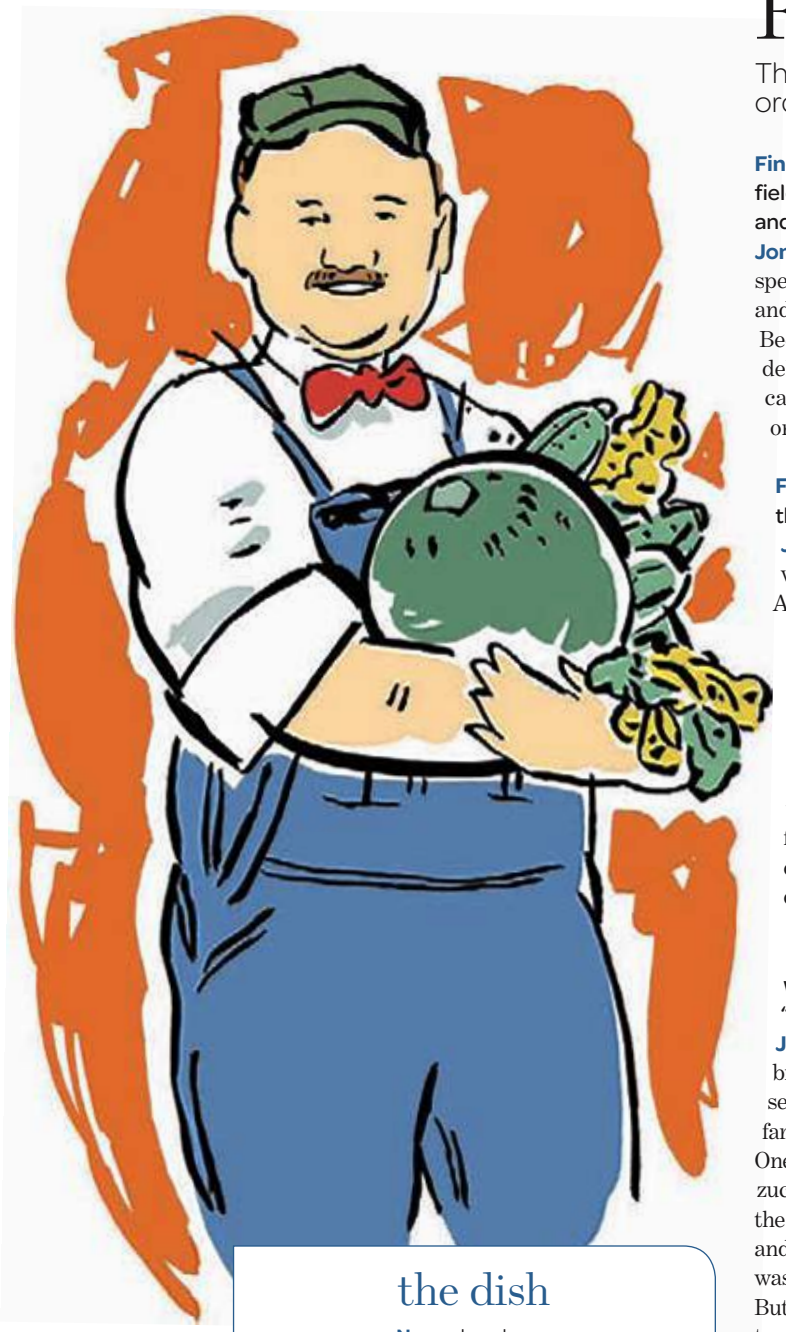
VEGETARIAN: May contain eggs and dairy ingredients

MAKE AHEAD: Can be completely prepared ahead (may need reheating and a garnish to serve)

QUICK: 30 minutes and under

Farmer Lee Jones

This Ohio-born, bow-tied farmer grows produce to order for chefs around the world. BY LISA WADDLE



the dish

Name: Lee Jones

Age: 48

Job: Co-owner of The Chef's Garden, which grows specialty produce for chefs worldwide, and of the nonprofit Veggie U, which brings healthy-eating classes to fourth graders nationwide

Started: 1983

Where: Milan, Ohio

Known for: Red bow tie and overalls

Fine Cooking: Why do your fieldworkers wear lab coats and harvest with scissors?
Jones: Everything we grow is specifically requested by a chef and must be accounted for. Because a lot of our produce is delicate, we take extra care. We can't risk a crushed strawberry or a bent herb.

FC: Have you always farmed this way?
Jones: No, 40 years ago we were a traditional family farm. A hailstorm in the 1980s ruined our crops, and we couldn't repay our loans. I was nineteen when the banks foreclosed. The house, land, equipment, cars—it was all gone. We started over with six acres that I bought a few miles down the road. I quit college, and my mom and dad moved in with me.

FC: How did you come up with the idea of being a "personal farmer" to chefs?
Jones: My dad, Bob, and my brother, Bobby, and I had started selling our vegetables at the farmers' market in Cleveland. One day, a woman saw my zucchini and asked if I had any of the blossoms for sale. I went home and told my dad; he thought she was a kook—who eats flowers? But she kept asking and offering to pay, so I brought her some. Turns out she knew a lot of chefs, and soon enough they were asking for special items. The word spread.

FC: Are you still selling at the farmers' market?
Jones: About 5 years into the new farm, we were getting so many requests from chefs that my dad said we needed to make a choice. I voted for regular customers, because chefs were 2 percent of the business and 80 percent of the aggravation. I got overruled.

FC: Any regrets?
Jones: We fill orders for up to 350 chefs each week, and sales have risen steadily. Now we're expanding beyond chefs to sell to the home gourmet. So I guess you should listen to your father.

FC: How many different vegetables, fruits, and herbs do you grow?
Jones: About 600 varieties, from White Icicle radishes to coconut thyme. But we've learned that every stage of a plant's life offers a different nuance, texture, flavor, and presentation on the plate. You can buy bok choy in seven stages, from micro to flowering, so that adds to the selection. Everything is grown using the best sustainable agriculture practices, hand-harvested, and shipped overnight. Twenty-four hours from ground to plate.

FC: Your methods are pretty high tech: bar-code tracking of every plant, a laboratory on site. Are you the farmer of the future?
Jones: Actually, we look more to the past for how we grow. We use crop rotation rather than chemical fertilizers to recharge the soil. Instead of buying new, we jury-rig old tractors, which are gentler on the soil. My dad says we're just trying to get as good as the growers were 100 years ago.

FC: If you weren't a farmer, what would you be?
Jones: Disappointed. I can't imagine being anything else.

Illustration by Ward Schumaker

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Yield – 2 dozen cookies

- 1 bag (11.5 oz.) Ghirardelli 60% Cacao Bittersweet Chocolate Chips
- 6 Tbsp. (3/4 stick) unsalted butter
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 bag (12 oz.) Ghirardelli Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips
- 1 cup (4 oz.) chopped walnuts

In double boiler over hot water, melt the bittersweet chocolate chips and butter. In large bowl with electric mixer, beat eggs and sugar until thick; stir in chocolate mixture. In small bowl, stir together flour and baking powder; stir into chocolate mixture. Gently mix in semi-sweet chocolate chips and walnuts.

Using a sheet of plastic wrap, form dough into two logs, each 2 inches in diameter and about 8 inches long. As dough will be very soft, use plastic wrap to hold dough in log shape. Wrap tightly. Refrigerate at least 1 hour or until firm.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Unwrap dough; with sharp knife, cut into 3/4-inch slices. Place slices 1 1/2 inches apart on greased or parchment-lined cookie sheet. Bake 12 to 14 minutes or until shiny crust forms on top but interior is still soft.

Cool on baking sheet. Enjoy the moment of timeless pleasure.



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